

# HUNGARIAN

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CARLYLEAN COURTSHIP.

BY E. THORNTON COOK.

CHAPTER I.

'OOR TAM' AT ECCLEFECHAN.

'TAM . . . Tam !' A woman called from a window, but her voice was low-pitched and did not penetrate the consciousness of the barefooted boy straying among the ducks on the edge of the small burn that swirled down the High Street outside the cottage that was his home.

Market day in Ecclefechan was drawing to a close. Cattlemen prodded their unwilling beasts, and swineherds, in darned gaberdine and leather breeches, pursued grunting, errant sows as the sound of a horn warned them of the approach of the mail coach *en route* from Glasgow to England. Young Tom Carlyle climbed to a precarious perch on a large rock amid-stream, the better to watch the ever-thrilling spectacle of the changing of the post-horses.

'Tam . . . Tam ! . . . Sandy's a-bed.'

Unwillingly, the boy slid off the rock, splashed through the shallow water and dug his toes into the soft mud of the bank as he climbed to the hard-trodden path. Hearing the soft thud of bare feet in the stone-paved entry, the mother poured another saucepanful of hot water into the wooden tub in which Sandy had been washed. Silently, she untied the single, sack-like garment which clothed her elder son from neck to ankles, smoothing it with work-worn fingers while he clambered into the tub. She loved

the texture of this piece of yellow serge of which, long ago, she had watched the weaving.

Her swift mind flashed back to a momentous night when, clad in this same homespun, she had opened the door of her aunt's house, where she had taken service to help her bankrupt father pay his debts, and seen the tall figure of James Carlyle outlined against the snow. Intuition told her that this was no ordinary call, and her heart beat fast as James stood making no move to enter. Then, suddenly, he had thrust wide open the door she had held hesitatingly ajar :

‘ Shut it in my face, lass, if you will ! ’

On her knees, washing the thin, grimy limbs of the child in the wooden tub before the kitchen fire, Margaret Carlyle heard her own voice echoing through the years. She had answered her lover in two words and he had snatched her into the safety of his strong arms.

Others might shake their heads in that James was ‘ an awfu’ fechter ’ and leader of a gang which often did battle with vagabond loons and predatory gypsies, but the young Peggy had no misgivings, and soon James had brought her as his bride to the Arched House in Ecclefechan which he and his brothers had built ; the little Scottish village of 500 inhabitants became the centre of her world.

Thomas was on her lap now ; a sprawling, lang, ill-put-together thing with an over-large head he had seemed to her when she had first seen him lying by her side, and she had been almost frightened by the uncanny wisdom in the child’s deep-set eyes. No such awe of Alexander had oppressed her ; he was no still infant keeping his mind to himself.

A step sounded outside and a voice called from the cottage beyond the linking arch which gave the house its name.

James was putting away his mason's gear in the yard behind the house.

Margaret Carlyle carried young Thomas up the steep stone stairs and hurried down again to give her man his supper.

Snuggling against Sandy, Tom lay drowsily listening to the waters of the burn in its swift passage against impeding stones ; he heard, too, the regular ticking of the tall grandfather clock in the living-room. Falling asleep, he awoke alarmed by his father's raised voice denouncing a preacher whose doctrine had shocked him on the previous Sunday :

' Aye, ye may thump and glower till your een start frae their sockets, I told him,' said James to his wife, ' but ye'll no' gar me believe sic stuff as that ! '

It was a relief to the startled child upstairs when the nightly reading of the Bible began. His mother's gentle singing of a psalm lulled him to sleep once more.

Margaret put the ' guid bukes ' carefully aside and picked up her knitting as James lighted his clay pipe, but she was surprised into dropping a stitch by his first sentence.

' If we're spared, lass, I'm thinking we'll be moving come the spring.'

' Leave the Arched House, James ! '

' Aye.' He rammed down his tobacco and Margaret waited for the explanation which she knew would be offered in its good time.

James Carlyle was taking a long view. His Peggy was young. Already she had given him two sons and in the course of years other children would follow ; she was already near her time with a third. The Arched House was over-small for a family and he had his eye on a dwelling across Pepper Field.

‘That by Matthew Murray’s Close?’ Margaret asked.  
‘Aye.’

The orchard would be fine for the children, reflected the mother, but James looked further into the future. For himself he had been compelled to pick up the rudiments of knowledge as he could, then chance had brought him opportunity and he learned the trade of a mason. His reputation for good honest work was high, and he felt that his sons had a right to be proud of their father. He, in his turn, hoped to be proud of them; they should have education and go far. Who knew? Perhaps young Thomas might be fit for the kirk!

The flitting took place. Fifty years later Thomas Carlyle could remember his own overwhelming sense of importance as he staggered down the Close carrying some trivial household article in the belief that he was helping.

Schooldays began, and young Tom walked to the Brick House hand in hand with Jean Johnston, ‘the nicest little lassie in Ecclefechan,’ returning to find that he had a sister of his own, but one who scarcely lived long enough to impress herself upon his memory; he accepted her death as tranquilly as the birth of a third brother a few months later. More important was the development of his own skill in catching eels in Ecclefechan Burn, the wonder of a sunset as seen when eating his supper astride the orchard wall, and the adventure of laying out his hardly earned, carefully hoarded coins in the purchase of *Reynard the Fox*, bound in greyish paper, at the annual Cattle Fair which attracted every drover from Land’s End to John o’ Groats.

He was nearly seven years old now and Wull Beatie, the carpenter’s son, called upon to examine the children in

Hoddam School, reported that young Tam was 'complete in English.'

Boldly, James Carlyle decided that his son should learn Latin and James Johnston, son of the Secession minister who preached in the little heath-thatched meeting-house into which James marshalled his family on Sundays, undertook to help him.

A year later a yet more momentous decision was taken. Tom must be entered at the Annan Academy. He could live with his mother's relatives, the Waugh's, and return home for the week-ends.

Margaret Carlyle summoned the travelling tailor to the cottage down the Close and sent Tom to cut him a sod of turf. Into this the bent old man stuck a notched stick with a candle firm in the cleft, and, sitting on the floor beside the flickering light, he cut and stitched all day, 'making down' a suit of James's that Tom might start out into the world well equipped.

Very early one morning Margaret Carlyle slipped a hot bannock into her eldest son's pocket and stood at the top of the village street watching the small boy trotting by his father's side on the way to six-mile-distant Annan, where, under Adam Hope, a schoolmaster who believed in using the birch and would sometimes pinch a pupil's ears until they bled, Tom was to learn to be a man.

The road was hard and the way long, but James did not slacken his pace until he reached Annan Bridge. He remembered travelling that same route once with his own father, fiery Tom Carlyle of Brownknowe, when the old man had resolutely refused to pay the three halfpence demanded as toll, thinking it an imposition. Instead, intent on getting his sack of barley to port, he had taken it on his back, and,

with his son clinging to the load, had boldly set his horse to swim the river.

He told the story now, but young Tom could spare no thought for the past. His eyes were on the high church steeple; a frightened dog dashing across the market-place with a kettle tied to its tail; and the mill hands and fisher folk who thronged the street.

Suddenly, the boy realised that Ecclefechan was not the centre of the universe as he had hitherto believed, but merely a place in a county which was part of the world that had a past and also a future.

Staring over the Solway Firth towards the distant Cumberland hills, other startling thoughts crowded into his mind and he visualised the mail coaches, mountainous with men and luggage and hitherto looked upon as some phenomenon of nature (like the sun and moon), as strange shuttles travelling on highways made by human hands and weaving towns and counties into a closer pattern.

‘Greetin’ Tam’ was the nickname bestowed upon Thomas Carlyle during the first bitter weeks in Annan, and not until he forgot his peace-loving mother’s last behest that there must be ‘na fechtin’ and, arming himself with one of his clogs, turned upon a crowd of tormentors in wild fury, was he left in peace to gather what wisdom he could in Adam Hope’s schoolroom.

‘Educate a boy and he grows up to despise his ignorant parents,’ said a neighbour warningly, but James Carlyle still planned his son’s future on bold lines, and, in the intervals of scouring, cooking and the bearing of children, Margaret Carlyle was laboriously teaching herself to write, for, for a son as ‘guid at his buiks’ as ‘oor Tam,’ there could be no other goal than Edinburgh, and he would want letters

from his mother. Not Alexander, nor John, nor Margaret, James, Mary, Jean or little Janet held so warm a place in her heart as that sprawling, lang, ill-put-together man-child who was her first-born.

## CHAPTER II.

### *JANE WELSH OF HADDINGTON.*

Jane Welsh glanced round her mother's drawing-room with considerable satisfaction. Flower-decked and fire-lit, it could scarcely fail to impress this Mr. Thomas Carlyle whom her erstwhile tutor Edward Irving was bringing to call. Should she be in the room when they arrived or not? Perhaps it would be more dramatic to make an entrance after the visitors had presented themselves to her mother. Jane fled aloft to her own room and did not reappear until Betty came to call her, sent by Mrs. Welsh.

Edward Irving sprang up eagerly as the black-haired, dark-eyed girl paused for a moment in the doorway, looking from one to the other of the two men, before holding out welcoming hands.

'My friend—Tom Carlyle,' said Irving, and Jane made swift scrutiny.

Tall, though not so tall as Irving, and with noticeably rugged features, Thomas Carlyle seemed older than his twenty-five years. She liked his voice, but—Heavens!—how clumsy he was with the egg-shell teacups!

Carlyle saw a slip of a girl with pale clear colouring and an attractively mobile face. The drawing-room of this (the finest house he had ever entered) was too full of the 'whim-whams' of fashion to please him, but he liked the garden with its trim-clipped box borders, its dis-



play of May flowers, and the delicate birch-tree visible through the large window.

Mrs. Welsh was called away. The trio drew nearer to the fire and Jane began to talk with vivacity. What was it someone had said of this man in her hearing?—‘Talent in plenty and with a fine vein of satire in him.’ A visit from a man of brains came as dew from Heaven, she must draw him out.

Pleasantly tired, after a walk of seventeen miles with his friend, Irving lay back at ease and the mellow light veiled the squint that was his one personal defect.

Son of an Annandale tanner, Edward Irving had made good use of his school years, and, at seventeen, had secured the mastership of a newly opened school in Haddington, where Dr. John Welsh, casting about for a suitable instructor for his brilliant little daughter who was clamouring to be taught ‘like a boy,’ engaged him to tutor the child who was nine years his junior. When Fate transferred the master to Kirkcaldy, where wider interests claimed him, Irving spent frequent holidays at Haddington, and became aware too late that Jane was alluring. In pity he watched her beating helpless wings against the bars of convention and environment; and found himself powerless to help. Now her gay laughter pleased him; it was well that he had brought Thomas Carlyle into her orbit.

‘Don’t boast!’ said Edward Irving, suddenly flinging a mocking remonstrance across the hearth-rug. ‘You were not always a satisfactory pupil, remember. Once, at least, I had to make my report on your progress “*pessima*”!’

‘Unkind!’ Jane flashed back. ‘Forget that, and remember rather how I tied a weight to my ankle and went uncomfortably to sleep, hoping to wake early so that I might study and please you with my industry.’

‘I remember the doll episode,’ answered Irving with a chuckle, stretching out his long frame as he lay back in a chair with his hands behind his head.

‘Alas, my poor doll!’ cried Jane. ‘I was only ten years old, Mr. Carlyle, but some unkind person suggested that “a young lady in Virgil” was too old to have such a plaything, so I, loving her well, decided that she must make a fitting exit from this world. She should end as Dido ended—as the doll of “a young lady in Virgil” should end. With her dresses (which were many), her sumptuous four-poster bed, a faggot or two, a few sticks of cinnamon and a nutmeg, I constructed a funeral pyre. I put her into the bed. Through my lips she spoke Dido’s oration; by my hand she stabbed herself with a penknife in lieu of a Tyrian sword! Then came the flare—for *she was stuffed with bran!* And in that supreme moment my love for her blazed as high as the flames. I shrieked and would have saved her an I could! As it was, I went on shrieking till everyone within hearing came rushing to offer foolish comfort. . . . An epitome of most of one’s heroic sacrifices,’ she added with such bitterness of tone that it aroused Carlyle’s attention. ‘Something magnanimously resolved upon, ostentatiously gone about, repented of at the last moment and bewailed with loud outcry! But the little tale illustrates what was my inner world at that period, something three-fourths old Roman and one-fourth Fairy.’

‘And the next outstanding episode?’ asked Carlyle with genuine interest.

‘The writing of a tragedy at fourteen,’ answered Irving promptly. ‘All very wild and bloody—the stage was littered with corpses after every act.’

‘My only dramatic effort—just an explosion,’ said Jane, shaking her head, ‘and now here am I doing nothing but

a little teaching, doomed to live in a place where the very air one breathes is impregnated with stupidity. Mr. Carlyle ! I look upon literature as the highest aim in life—and I am unable even to get the books I want to read.’

Here Carlyle could sympathise. Six years before he had offered up an impassioned prayer : ‘ O Fortune ! Thou that shares out to man his lot of pleasure and of pain, that givest to one to feast upon fat things and dash through life in a coach and six, and to another to starve on salt herrings and drive his Cutler’s wheel. Bestow (if it please thee) crowns, kingdoms and principalities, purses, puddings and power upon the great, the noble and the fat ones of the earth ; but grant to me, that, with a heart of independence, unseduced by the world’s smiles and unbending to its frowns, I may attain to literary fame. Then, though starvation be my lot, I will smile that I have not been born a King ! ’

At least he could help this eager girl to the extent of sending her books. Waving aside her rhapsodies on such writers as Byron and Rousseau, he told her that she must learn German, then began to talk of Goethe and Schiller. He spoke well, for in Schiller’s early life he found a resemblance to his own. Schiller too had battled with poverty, yet had conquered a place for himself in the world, as he, Thomas Carlyle, had vowed to do.

Jane Welsh listened, enthralled by his eloquence, and Irving watched her changing face from behind the shelter of his hand, amazed for the thousandth time at his own blindness in the past years.

Mrs. Welsh’s return broke the magic thread that had spun itself around the three and the young men moved to depart.

‘ Come again,’ said Jane imperatively, her dark eyes

smiling on Thomas Carlyle, and her mother nodded acquiescence.

‘Treat this as your Haddington home, as Mr. Irving used to do,’ added Jane, flashing a smile at her old friend and suddenly remembering that he was to preach in Haddington on the morrow. ‘We will come and hear you,’ she promised.

Irving shrugged his shoulders. What would be Jane’s comment if he told her that a few Sundays previously one of his congregation had walked out in the middle of the sermon, with the audible comment that the young preacher had ‘ower muckle gran’ner’ for ‘the likes of ordinary people.’ And yet, God knew that he had worked hard on that sermon, believing that he had a vital message to deliver.

In companionable silence the friends walked back to the inn where they were thriftily sharing a room. Carlyle’s thoughts were at work on the list of books that Jane should read. Her summer would be profitably occupied if she studied Robertson and Hume, Russell’s *Modern Europe*, Voltaire’s pretty little histories, and, for lighter fare, Tasso and De Staël; he must send her *De l’Allemagne* and Noehden’s Grammar.

Strange, how secure seemed the base of this new friendship with the eager girl whose home he had entered for the first time that evening; he felt as if he had known her from infancy.

Irving, too, was thinking of Jane. He felt that the visit had been a success, although he wished that he and Carlyle had been of such rank and consideration in the world as would have made the acquaintanceship creditable to their hostess. As it was, he was uncomfortably aware of certain *faux pas*. Poor little Jeannie! For all her laughter and gay courage he knew that she was still grieving over the

sudden death of her father. Vivid in Irving's mind was the account of the tragedy as given by Betty the maid.

'Ye see,' she had said, with her frail hand clinging to his arm, 'the doctor was a regular man in his habits. He used to come hame at four o'clock an' tak' a bath before his denner, but yae Thursday he cam' hame an' took naither his bath nor his denner, but gaed straight to his naked bed. The next day he was in a high fever, an' word was sent to Edinburgh for a grand doctor, an' he cam' wi' his cocket hat and gold-headed stick an' had a consultation wi' Dr. Howden. When it was ower he cam' thro' the kitchen, for that was the nearest way to the kerridge . . . "Ow, he'll get roon!" he said. "He'll get roon!" . . . But he didna get roon ava, for the next day he was waur, an' on the Sabbath morn he was sae bad they put a laddie on a horse to ride to Edinburgh for the doctor, but before the laddie was weel awa' the breath gaed clean oot o' him! There was deid silence in the hoose for aboot half an oor, and the first that break it wa' Miss Jeannie. She was sitting on the stair and got up with a scream crying, "I maun see my father!" She rushed to the locked door o' his room, but before she could open it Dr. Howden gat her in his airms an' she fainted awa'. He carried her thro' the drawing-room, ye ken, to the little bedroom aff it an' laid her on the bed beside her puir mother that was lying there in a deid swoon—an' they were like twa corpses. Eh, but it wa' waefu'! I thocht I wad look in an' say a word, but the mistress brak' oot into sic a fit o' greeting I thocht she wad brak' her heart, so I told Dr. Howden that I thocht she wad dee—but he only wished that Miss Jeannie could get a gude greet too!'

Anxiously, Irving asked himself whether the panacea

offered by Carlyle would help the girl? Would it mend matters to introduce her to such writers as von Schiller and von Goethe or any other noble of German literature? Assuredly he would be glad to see Jane surrounded by a more sober set of literary companions than Rousseau and Byron, but he had an inward belief that there was something poisonous to both virtue and conduct in the German school of thought; the Teuton seemed to recognise two standards of conduct, one for the man of genius and the other for the common herd. Irving knit his brow in sore perplexity. He was no German scholar, so distrusted his own judgment, but intuition told him that Jane Welsh was dipping into dangerous waters. Was her soul safe? He feared that she was putting religion away from her. If only she would study her Bible with the same intensity she gave to secular literature he felt that a gust of new nature would flow in upon her spirit. If not, and she drifted on much longer without solid mental food, she might escape altogether from the region of honest, home-bred men.

In the Haddington drawing-room Mrs. Welsh swept up the hearth. 'Good Heavens, Jane! How that man has scratched my brass fender.'

'He should be provided with carpet slippers and a pair of handcuffs before being admitted to a drawing-room,' admitted Jane, sharing her mother's dismay as she looked at the damage. 'Only his tongue is fit for liberty. And why!' she added, gathering up the china, '*why* must he make a pudding in his teacup?'

But Mrs. Welsh's lamentations continued till Jane lost patience and retreated to her own room with the avowed intention of writing letters. Instead she dreamed, remem-

bering a sonnet addressed 'to a lock of my lady's hair,' which had reached her from Edward Irving a year or two previously :

*Though raven lock ! On which mine eyes do rest  
Unwearied. Thou dear emblem of my Jane  
Whose hand did crop thee from her head, fit test  
Of her affection to remain . . .*

Would she have married the writer if he could have freed himself from the ill-considered engagement in which he had become entangled at Kirkcaldy ? Gazing at her own reflection in the mirror, the girl told herself that she did not know. Her wits were quicker than his, her tongue and intellect sharper. Could he have satisfied her ? And yet what other outlet was there before her save marriage ? How else could she escape from Haddington ? What man in her circle could give her the life for which she longed ? Into her memory leapt certain stirring phrases from Irving's letters. 'When I am in your company my whole soul would rush to serve you . . . My tongue trembles to speak my heart's fullness' . . . Had *he* forgotten ? To-night, at least, neither look nor tone had betrayed other than friendship.

'Jane !' said Mrs. Welsh, opening her daughter's door. 'If you are writing to Eliza Stodart you can tell her that the only difference in her marmalade recipe and mine is that I give double the quantity of sugar to fruit.'

'Yes, mamma !'

But it was of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* Jane wrote and not of marmalade. Had Eliza read that wonderful work ? If not, she must forthwith. Tedious in detail it might be, and culpably indelicate too often, but surely for splendour of eloquence and ardour of passion it could have no match in the French language.

Jane's heart beat as she opened the book to re-read various passages, constrained to admit that such irregularities as Julie's could scarcely be countenanced in Haddington. But then no woman in Haddington could be called upon to fight against such temptations as those that beset that charming heroine. Should any woman of her acquaintance meet a St. Preux, struggle as Julie struggled, endure as she endured, yield as she had yielded and repent as had Julie, Jane felt that she could love that woman better than the chastest, coldest prude between John o' Groats and Land's End.

'Read, Eliza, and fear not that you will be ruined, undone, or whatever adjective best suits that fallen state into which women, and angels, persist in stumbling at times !'

Jane scribbled fast. 'I never felt my mind more prepared to brave temptation of every sort than when I closed the second volume of this strange book,' she wrote. 'I verily believe that if the Devil himself had waited upon me in the guise of Lord Byron I would have desired Betty to show him out——'

'Jane !' said Mrs. Welsh, looking in again. 'Tell Eliza that her hens need pills.'

'The Lord give me patience,' muttered Jane impatiently as her mother left the room. How impossible to concentrate amid such mundane interruptions !

'Read the book, Eliza, and ask your heart, or rather your judgment, if Julie be vicious. But I warn you of one serious consequence of reading *Héloïse*—that is if your soul-strings are tuned to the same key as mine !—You will never marry !—Alas——'

'Jane !' said Mrs. Welsh's insistent voice. 'Tell her there is plenty of fruit here, and sugar too. I'll make the marmalade for her !'



‘Not one word more will I write for her, by God!’ Jane cried in silent passion as she jabbed her pen into the paper. ‘Oh, do go to bed, mamma!’

### CHAPTER III.

#### ‘TWO ANNANDALE MEN IN FIFE.’

Edward Irving had first drifted into Carlyle’s orbit when, proud of some youthful success, the former had visited his old schoolmaster, Adam Hope, and found him swinging the ever-ready ‘cat’ from his wrist while hammering Latin into the heads of a group of boys, one of whom was Thomas Carlyle. To the latter’s eyes seventeen-year-old Irving, in black coat and tight-fitting pantaloons, seemed an emblem of prosperity as he stood very straight on his feet talking, in a casual manner, of the merits of famous Edinburgh professors, and a wave of ambition assailed him.

Time passed, and every now and then news reached Annandale of some fresh laurel won by ‘Edward Irving the tanner’s son who’s training to be a preacher.’ Sometimes Tom would look at Irving’s home and wonder what it felt like to live in so large a house; it had three full front windows upstairs, and two on the street level.

Then there came a day when it was decided that something beyond Adam Hope’s teaching was necessary for James Carlyle’s eldest son, and once more his parents walked with him to the outskirts of Ecclefechan. Thomas had been seven years old when Margaret Carlyle had watched him start for Annan; now he was nearly fourteen and his destination was Edinburgh, sixty miles distant.

As escort on the long walk he had Tom Smail, a self-assured boy slightly older than himself, who had been up the previous term. Tom walked ahead of his com-

panion whistling boldly, but Thomas looked back through the greyness of the November morning to his mother with a shawl over her head, and felt like becoming 'greetin' Tam' once more.

The boys spent three days on the journey. At night, thanks to the kindness of a decent man who was driving a load of potatoes to Edinburgh, the pair cowered down on his wares and slept with sacking as a coverlet.

When Edinburgh was reached, Thomas Carlyle forgot his disdain for the older Tom's poor Latin and indifferent scholarship, he showed himself so unafraid of the immensity of the wonder city. Silently he followed in Smail's wake while the latter bargained with landladies, ultimately securing an economical lodging in Simon Square which the two agreed to share with a third boy.

They would require little in the way of food, for, according to custom, oatmeal, potatoes and an occasional supply of salt butter with a few eggs as a luxury, would be delivered by carrier from their respective homes.

The boys ate a hasty meal and set off to see the sights, Tom urging Thomas on through the amazing streets, now thrusting him into St. Giles, now pulling him through booths or down Wynds, and so to Parliament Square, where Smail audaciously pushed open the door of a vast hall dimly lit by candles, wherein more men than young Thomas had seen in the whole course of his life walked and talked, or clustered round a kind of throne on which sat wonderful, velvet-clad figures, before whom hovered other men, stately in wigs and gowns. Sixty years later Thomas Carlyle could recall his own awe at his first sight of functioning law.

bewildering life, and fought his way to the front in the group of would-be readers who daily besieged the Library to force books from the unwilling Highlander acting as librarian. He read voraciously. Shakespeare, Smollett, Robertson, Fielding, Locke, *Don Quixote*, *The Arabian Nights*, *Waverley* (in its year of publication) and Lord Chesterfield's *Letters* came early on his list ; but he flung the last aside, shocked at the pitiful disposition of the author, yet, when he looked about the lecture halls and at his fellow-students, constrained to admit that some of his lordship's directions as to the advisability of personal cleanliness might be displayed, printed in large type, and with advantage to humanity.

Returning to Ecclefechan for one of the long vacations, Carlyle found that his father had decided to turn farmer.

'Jerry building has come to stay,' he told his son. 'There's na future in the trade for an honest mason, lad. We'll try the land.'

Thomas Carlyle's own immediate prospect was concerning him more than it did his family, the members of which refused to consider him as a drone in their midst, although he might lie under a hedge battling with a German grammar while they worked in the fields ; only the neighbours shook their heads and whispered that 'Tam had always been sair afflicted with the big head.'

But almost coincident with the family move to the bare little farm of Mainhill came an opportunity at which Tom grasped. Annan Academy required a mathematical master and offered a salary of between sixty and seventy pounds per annum. Out of such an amount a man could save, said the young applicant, and with Thomas Murray, an Edinburgh student, set out to walk to Dumfries (where sat those in authority) and returned triumphant. The post

was secured, he could be self-supporting and more ; six years hence he should have reached his goal—the Church ! There was rejoicing at Mainhill where, after the usual Bible reading that night, Margaret Carlyle's voice led her family in the singing of one of her favourite psalms :

*' I will always give thanks unto the Lord : his praise shall ever be in my mouth.*

*My soul shall make her boast in the Lord : the humble shall hear thereof and be glad.*

*O praise the Lord with me : and let us magnify his name together.*

*I sought the Lord, and he heard me ; yea, he delivered me out of all fear.*

*They had an eye unto him, and were lightened ; and their faces were not ashamed !*

*Lo, the poor crieth, and the Lord heareth him ; yea, and saveth him out of all his troubles. . . .'*

Annan proved to be too near Ecclefechan. Thomas found himself not ' Mr. Carlyle, mathematical master and divinity student,' but ' Tam—the mason's son.' Pride, shyness, lack of manners and his background, debarred him from what little society there was, and his erstwhile student friends, Murray, Robert Mitchell, James Johnstone and Waugh, were either still in Edinburgh, or tutoring, while they prepared themselves for the Church. Only on the periodic occasions when he returned to the city to deliver a discourse before the professors in Divinity Hall did the dour young Scot make social contact with men of like mind. Into one such gathering came Irving, on holiday from his school at Kirkcaldy, and the fact that Carlyle was from Annan caught his attention. How was this man and that ? What progress was So-and-so making in his business ? Was the baker's new baby a boy or a girl ? There seemed no end

to Irving's desire for intimate details and the badgered, morose youth of nineteen grew hot and harassed.

His reiterated phrase 'I don't know' amused Irving, who laughed good-humouredly at the other's ignorance, which brought Carlyle to his feet in an outburst of wrath.

'Sir ! By what right do you try my knowledge in this way ?' he cried passionately. 'Are you Grand Inquisitor ? By what authority do you question and cross-question people ? I care not if the process of birth and generation should cease altogether in Annan——'

An hilarious group shouted him down and Carlyle banged the door behind him, going home to his solitary lodgings where he studied Newton's *Principia*, determined to restore his self-respect by bringing it 'all prostrate to his feet.' But the cold night hours wore on, the *Principia* eluded him and Irving's boisterous laugh haunted his memory. He hoped he would never meet his tormentor again.

Then, in Kirkcaldy, a rival school to that managed by Irving was opened and the offer of a mastership came to Carlyle. Before he could take up the new post Adam Hope's wife died, and on going to condole with the old man Carlyle found Irving sitting with him, an Irving who showed himself possessed of such a power of sympathy and gift of words that Carlyle could only watch him marvelling. After the brief service he took the other's outstretched hand willingly.

'You are coming to Kirkcaldy, I hear,' said Irving. 'I am there ? My house is yours—two Annandale men must not be strangers in Fife.'

## CHAPTER IV.

*FIRST STEPS IN LOVE AND LITERATURE.*

The foundations of an enduring friendship were laid when Thomas Carlyle and Edward Irving found themselves together in Kirkcaldy. They walked together on the sandy beach of the 'lang toun' talking as only youth can talk; they watched the looms and whale fisheries and explored the little Fifeshire sea villages with their poor little havens, salt-pans and weather-beaten bits of breakwater.

Sometimes, Carlyle sat under his friend, listening to crude sermons delivered to a congregation that grew scantier every week, laughing inwardly at the thought of the hides that were being pierced as Irving's grand voice thundered forth rash denunciations; sometimes, the two struggled miles through wind and rain to be present at the induction of a new minister in a distant town. Very gradually there was born in Thomas Carlyle a knowledge of his own unsuitability for the pulpit; he fought his own conscience, feeling it was only respectable to keep up a fixed prospect in life, and went with Irving to the Trossachs and Greenock, where they saw queer stumpy boats called steamers making regular passages to Glasgow.

The two walked barefooted, carrying their boots and socks on their sticks and the remainder of their luggage in bulging pockets; they lodged with shepherds in solid grey-stone cottages or slept on the moors, living on eggs, milk, porridge and oatcake, and they talked of the Ettrick poet Hogg; one Walter Scott who was fast becoming a celebrity; and Robert Burns whose grave Carlyle had discovered in Dumfries churchyard. So they came by the Gray Mare's Tail into Moffatdale, and finally to the frugal little farm of

Mainhill, two miles out of Ecclefechan, where Thomas's younger brothers and sisters looked shyly at tall Irving, but Margaret Carlyle offered her son's friend a gentle welcome, and James argued with him on theology and the doctrine of resurrection.

'I'm thinking a poor stinking clog of a body like Robert Scott the weaver's would be a poor kind of thing to inhabit a heavenly mansion,' he insisted dogmatically.

Thomas took no part in the discussion. Irving had opened his library to him as well as his heart, offering him will and waygate upon its contents, and now French classics awaited him, and Gibbon all ready to be devoured at the rate of a volume a day. It was well that he had something to engross him, for, in addition to his uncertainty in regard to the future, Thomas Carlyle was suffering the pangs of a first love-affair. Irving had introduced him not only to his fiancée, Isabelle Martin, daughter of the manse whereat he lodged, but to an erstwhile pupil, Margaret Gordon, an alien in Kirkcaldy like themselves, and to her he had lost his heart.

Perhaps it was the realisation that no mere schoolmaster in a small Fifeshire town could hope to win a Margaret Gordon that presently stirred Thomas Carlyle to fresh discontent.

Battling with recalcitrant pupils, month after month, he came to the desperate conclusion that, while he could never be a minister, he would rather die in a ditch than continue to live by teaching, and when Irving, in a state of similar dissatisfaction, made a funeral pyre of his own sermons and departed suddenly for Edinburgh, Carlyle determined to follow his friend. He had saved nearly ninety pounds. Surely such a sum, augmented by private teaching, should

suffice until he could launch himself in some new profession that would enable him to marry ?

Scottish caution lodged the adventurer as thriftily as had done Smail in the old days, and once again the carrier brought Carlyle welcome parcels from home. Now, hand-knit stockings ; now, half a cheese and a query as to how his butter was lasting out. With the gifts came letters. James Carlyle wrote of cattle and crops and of the labourers' difficulties with work scant and living high ; Sandy slipped his letter in among some oatcakes, telling of his mother's pride in a new bonnet sent by Thomas, 'although our father thinks it too gaudy,' and to offer a suggestion. Why should not the brilliant elder brother try Law ? 'You may think you have not enough money, but with what assistance we could give you, and your own industry, I think there is no fear.'

Twelve-year-old Mary wrote 'between waiting on the cattle' ; but most precious of all were the laboriously written letters from the mother whose unaccustomed fingers had at length mastered the pen :

'My dear Son,' read Thomas Carlyle, sitting with his spare coat wrapped round his knees for warmth, 'I take this opportunity of writing a few words, as you will get it free by the carrier . . . Oh, Tom, mind the golden season of youth and remember your creator. Seek God while he may be found. Call upon him when he is near. . . . Have you got through the Bible yet ? If so, read it again. I hope you will not weary and may the Lord open your understanding . . . We send you a small piece of ham and a minding of butter, as I am sure yours is done before now . . . Good night, Tom, for it is a stormy night and I must to the byre to milk . . . Now, Tom, be sure and tell me about your chapters.'



Thomas had to admit that he had neglected his Bible, but to satisfy his mother he began re-reading his favourite Job, although mundane cares were troubling him. Living seemed unduly high in Edinburgh, his week's bill totalled fifteen shillings and twopence, despite the fact that the meals sent in by the slatternly landlady were paltry and ill-cooked.

He considered Sandy's suggestion of the Law doubtfully. Would it not cost many hundreds to become an advocate? Meanwhile, what could he do about his washing? His stout, home-made shirts were becoming sadly discoloured.

'Arise and settle the problem of thy life!' The words rang through his mind as clearly as if they had been spoken, and Thomas Carlyle plunged into deep waters. Doubt, Fear, Unbelief, Mockery and Scorn assailed him as he walked up and down hour after hour, seeing himself a failure, rejected of men. What use was he in the world? he asked himself bitterly. Who was there who had faith in him other than his own family? Even his wooing of Margaret Gordon had not prospered. He still writhed at the thought of a recent visit when a dragon-like aunt had confronted him with the news that her niece was being sent to England.

Ill and miserable, Carlyle watched the grey dawn above the greyer city and a passionate desire for Annandale assailed him. He would remain no longer in these verminous lodgings in bustling, reeking Edinburgh, but take his books with him to Mainhill. His mother should awaken him at dawn, he would delve in the fields and win back the health that was fast leaving him; he would study in the peace of the country and fit himself to make the doors of human society fly open before him yet, though now his petards would not burst.

But there was no peace to be found at Mainhill. In the very slouch of his father's shoulders as he followed the plough, Carlyle saw something of the older man's despondency over the silent withdrawal of his son from the high profession to which he had been dedicated; and when he shut himself and his books into the little room beyond the kitchen he was disturbed by the noise of farm work, the jangling of milk pails or the screech of a captured hen about to have its neck wrung.

'If you cannot find a silent method of killing those chickens, I'll eat no more of them,' he once swore, and Margaret Carlyle lifted up her hands in despair.

'Tam, Tam, ye are gey ill t'deal wi',' she lamented, and Thomas retreated in shame, aware that the birds were being slaughtered for his sake.

'Tam—a letter for you,' cried Mary, coming breathlessly up the farm track with a missive in her hand.

He snatched it eagerly, seeing that it was from Margaret Gordon, and retreated into the noisy little room which family sacrifice had set aside for his use.

Margaret wrote guardedly. She hoped that Mr. Carlyle's health was restored now that he had left Edinburgh, and that he would not overwork himself. She wished him to know, too, that she prized his friendship and held a high opinion of his talents. 'May Fortune be propitious to you in every part of your voyage through life,' concluded the girl primly.

It was the nearest approach to a love-letter that Carlyle had received. Reading it, he read into the lines that which was not there and sent so passionate a reply that Margaret answered in alarm. No, indeed no! She could not meet him. Neither would she write to him in the vein he wished—it was ungenerous to urge her to act against her

sense of duty. This must be their last communication and in her anxiety for his future welfare Margaret ventured to counsel.

‘Cultivate the milder dispositions of your heart, Mr. Carlyle. Subdue the more extravagant visions of your brain and in time your ability will be recognised. Genius will render you great,’ she told him, growing bolder, ‘may Virtue render you beloved. Remove the awful distance between you and ordinary men by kind and gentle manners, and deal mildly with their inferiority. Why conceal the real goodness that flows in your heart? . . . Adieu again, and when you think of me let it be as a kind sister to whom your happiness will always yield delight and your griefs sorrow.’

Warily, Margaret gave no address and a postscript informed her lover that ‘in a few minutes’ she would be leaving Scotland ‘for ever.’

He had lost her.

Sleepless and dyspeptic Carlyle ranged the country-side doing battle with himself till Irving arrived unexpectedly, bringing grand news. Since the holocaust of his sermons he had been preaching in a new vein and at last men were listening to his message. Now, he had been invited to Glasgow as the great Dr. Chalmers’ assistant. Carlyle listened to his friend’s eager planning and walked with him some eight miles on his journey. They separated on the top of a hill which commanded the whole of Upper Annandale and the grand mass of Moffat. White clouds flecked the clear winter blue sky, casting shadows on the wide landscape to be chased away by the wind. ‘It’s like life,’ thought Carlyle as he tramped back alone, but with courage renewed. He would make another struggle to find a foot-

hold in Edinburgh and, if this failed, would emigrate to America, though that seemed an awful destiny.

The Wheel turned. Thomas Carlyle, now grimly attending law lectures, having cut his living expenses to a minimum, secured two hours' teaching a day with remuneration at four pounds a month, and a Dr. Brewster let him undertake a piece of translation ; his literary career had begun. In hopeful mood the young Scot wrote a descriptive article on a walk in the Yarrow country, which vanished for ever into an unappreciative editorial maw, then boldly carried a scholarly criticism of a noted French book to Jeffrey of the *Edinburgh Review*. Once again he was ignored. In the watches of the night he composed sarcastic letters, but by day he gave his mind to the Law.

Suddenly a miracle occurred. Dr. Brewster required a biographer for his *Encyclopedia*, which had now reached the letter 'M,' and bethought himself of the gaunt young man from Annandale who might surely be secured on frugal terms. Would Carlyle care to write up Montesquieu ? He would and did. Then came Lady Mary Montague, to be followed by Sir John Moore, and gradual progress through the 'N's'. It was well, for Carlyle had come to the conclusion that the Law was a shapeless mass of absurdity and chicane and that he was as unsuitable for the legal profession as he had been for the ministry and schoolmastering.

Irving listened thoughtfully to his friend's tirade. Carlyle was no winning, accommodating man, rather was he original, commanding and self-willed. How, in Heaven's name, could the morose, dyspeptic individual be brought into the public eye ?

'Give vent to your notions,' he urged. 'Give them tongue—upon every subject give them tongue.'

'But how ?' asked Carlyle.

‘Without social backing there is but one avenue—the press,’ answered Irving shrewdly.

Conscious of his previous failures Carlyle shook his head, but Irving was insistent. ‘Try the *Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood’s*,’ he reiterated. ‘Do not steal away saying “the one I am not fit for—the other I am not willing for.” You are qualified to give an opinion on any work of mathematics, physics, general literature, history and politics, though not perhaps on law ! As for *Blackwood’s*, the magazine presents bad company, I fear, but it offers a field for fugitive writing and good introductions. This last advice is given rather against my conscience,’ added Irving, suddenly conscious of his cloth, ‘but if I were not satisfied that you would use your pen as conscience directs, I would never ask you to use it for a livelihood.’

‘Brewster’s *Encyclopedia*——’ began Carlyle, but Irving interrupted him.

‘Writers in encyclopedias do not get out from the crowd ; writers in the *Review* are noted.’ His enthusiasm grew as he talked. Carlyle must be practical in his choice of subject and influence should be sought. ‘Take the matter to thought,’ he urged.

The advice was repeated whenever the friends met, now in Edinburgh and now in Glasgow. The Glasgow visits were milestones in Carlyle’s life. He travelled on the Bo’ness steamer and then by canal and coach to Irving’s spacious ground-floor room in Kent Street, so different from his own abode. Loneliness was forgotten as he walked with his friend in and out of the weavers’ shops, and watched him comfort some fretful child or eat a potato picked from a family pot.

Once he witnessed a passage at arms between Irving and a black-visaged, infidel cobbler and saw the fierce little man

succumb to Irving's charm, reinforced by Irving's knowledge.

'What dy'e ken aboot leather?' he had asked, snatching a piece of his property from Irving's hand.

The tanner's son had not forgotten his father's trade and knew a great deal.

'You're a sensible fellow,' the other grudgingly admitted at length. 'Ye ken aboot leather . . . Maybe we'll coom and hear ye on the Sabbath.'

Once only did they meet with a bitter retort to Irving's invariable salutation of 'Peace be with you.'

'Aye, sir,' spoke up an angry little man with swollen veins throbbing in his brow. 'Aye, if ther's a-plenty wi' t'peace!'

After such a morning Irving would guide his friend to the homes of parishioners at the other end of the social scale, and Carlyle, who had known little of any other life than that lived in a cottage or cheap lodgings, was amazed at the luxury of their homes and the gay ease with which Irving would encounter prosperous merchants, complacent mothers and laughing daughters.

But better even than the Glasgow visits were the long homeward walks. Once the pair set out from Paisley in an April dawn accompanied by a friend with a horse and accomplished the first fifteen miles on the ride-and-tie principle. Then, after a wayside meal, Irving and Carlyle continued to Drumclog Moss, where they rested among the peat-hags, awed by the silence of the world around them.

Far, far away to the westward over the brown horizon there towered up a high, irregular pyramid. 'Ailsa Craig,' hazarded Carlyle, breaking the long, intimate silence as the declining sun touched the rock to a new whiteness. Un-

willingly, the two rose and sauntered on into the Glasgow-Muirkirk highway, knowing that the glorious day was over, yet loath to separate. Pausing again, they leant against a stone dyke watching the sun set, and suddenly with amazing gentleness Irving asked a question that had been long in his mind. Thomas Carlyle answered briefly and Irving knew that his fear was justified ; in religion his friend was separated from him by an unbridgeable chasm. They parted with a silent handshake—Irving to walk till midnight, back to Glasgow, Carlyle to seek a few hours' rest at the Muirkirk Inn. At daybreak he left the town asleep in its pillar of furnace smoke and strode on over the moors through Nithsdale and Dumfries—fifty-four miles to the home where his mother watched for him.

When next Irving came for what he called 'a sunny islet' in his year, and Carlyle walked to meet him in the woods of Mount Annan, he found that his confession had not broken the long friendship. Irving had accepted his apostasy and was content to talk of the future. 'Some day,' he prophesied, 'we two will shake hands across the burn in Ecclefechan, you as first in Literature, I in Divinity, and the world will say—"Both those men are from Annandale—Ahem ! *Where is Annandale ?* "'

Carlyle was writing in earnest. With a heart still aching for Margaret Gordon, he began a novel in which the hero, Wotton Reinfred, should suffer as he himself had suffered :

' . . . He pressed for an explanation with increasing apprehension,' wrote Carlyle, 'but none was to be had save only broken hints . . . that he must cease to visit her. In vain the thunderstruck Wotton demanded, "Why ? WHY ?" . . . Only by the thrills of anguish that quivered over her face could a calmer man have divined that she was suffering. Wotton's pride was stung ; he rose and

held out his hand. "Farewell, then, Madam," he said in a low, steady voice . . . She put her hand in his ; she looked in his face, tears started in her eyes . . .'

He wrote, read and wandered over the fields, now with his father, now with Alick and John in the gloaming time when their work was done and their sisters were at the milking, all but six-year-old Jean—'Craw' as Thomas Carlyle teasingly called her, because she alone of all the family was dark—who, her duck and poultry charges safely housed, would stumble over the furrows after her long-legged brothers, listening to the talk she could not understand.

Jean had a fine capacity for listening and would sit at table, chin in hand, her big eyes straying from one to another, when, with deliberate persistence, the mother would lead the talk to theology ; night after night her eldest son gently evaded her.

The end of the summer found Thomas Carlyle back in Edinburgh. Dr. Brewster received him kindly, gave him fifteen guineas for contributions to date, and promised that he should have more work when Legendre's *Elements of Geometry* came to hand for translation, the remuneration for this would be fifty pounds.

In happy mood Carlyle hastened off to buy a pair of silver-rimmed spectacles for his father, reflecting that he could now help Alick with the stock and contribute towards John's schooling. Of his mother's needs he was less certain. Could she be wanting another bonnet or should he send her a sovereign ? He laughed to himself as he imagined her protest, and how she would cry out that he had too few of such coins for himself. That might be so for the moment, but, by and by, he would have plenty, and his mother must want for nothing.



The optimistic mood did not last long. Verminous lodgings, ill-cooked fare and an orgy of reading did their work, and soon poor Tom was crying out that if the Devil had *his* stomach to chew with he could not wish him worse.

Alarmed at his friend's depression Irving summoned him to Glasgow, and then, since this failed to cure, carried him to Haddington, where Jane Welsh danced into Carlyle's life and complicated the characters he was trying to draw in Wotton Reinfred.

Lying back on the bed in the room he shared with Carlyle at the George Inn, Irving meditated on their friendship.

It was a nice subject for analysis ; the two had little in common either in character or general turn of thought, but they held pleasant communion. Carlyle lacked definite religious principles ; Irving knew himself to be deficient in literary taste. Was the subconscious lack in each supplied by the other ?

Without influence, position, fortune, yet ambitious, each had hung his hopes high, and though they had chosen different paths the path of each was, next to his own, that which the other most admired.

Suddenly his thoughts swung to Jane. He thought of her dark eyes and darker hair—hair to which he had once written a sonnet. Turning restlessly, he tried to force his mind into another channel, for of Jane he must not dream. He and she alike had decreed forgetfulness and he was in honour bound to one who held him tied. Isabelle ! He must think of Isabelle—not Jane.

\*Carlyle kicked off his boots. How Elysian had been those fleeting hours in the fire-lit Haddington drawing-room ! Perhaps he might read German with this new-found friend on the morrow ? Jane should prove an ardent pupil.

## CHAPTER V.

*THE MIND OF A ST. PREUX.*

Young Mr. Thomas Carlyle, tall, blond, earnest-eyed but shaggy-haired, sometimes embarrassingly shy and at other moments dogmatically self-assertive, had not made as favourable an impression upon Jane Welsh as she had on him, and when his carefully chosen packet of books arrived from Edinburgh she was in no mood to appreciate the stout volume of Milton, or even *De l'Allemagne*, although the accompanying letter offered a pretty compliment.

The lender hoped that Miss Welsh would like Madame de Staël, even though that celebrated writer lacked the sprightliness, 'the bland and sparkling wit,' which so gracefully adorned a certain young lady he had been privileged to meet recently.

'Who would have guessed that that uncouth individual had so pretty a gift of expression !' laughed Jane, tossing the letter aside.

She was accustomed to compliments and the admiration of young men ; the trouble was that none she knew could satisfy her requirements, for Jane too was ambitious.

'James Baird, James Aitken, George Craig, George Rennie, Robert McTurk and Robbie Angus,' she numbered them on her fingers and vowed that each was more commonplace than the last. Dr. Fyffe was not much better, though he could beat her at chess. 'Oh, I verily believe that Haddington is the dimmest, dearest spot in the Creator's universe,' raged Jane ; 'everything is the *same*, everything is *stupid* ! "The thing that hath been is that also which shall be" . . . I want to get out—I can't get out—I *will* get out, by the wife of Job I will . . . But how ? I'm growing old . . .

If I reach twenty in vain I'll live and die a virgin,' she told her nodding reflection in the mirror with all seriousness. Yet marriage with a commonplace man would be intolerable. Still, it would be terrible to become one of the band of ageing spinsters at whom she had often mocked. What atonement could she make to appease Fate? Should she write a novel endowing her heroine with beauty and wit, showing her as the Empress of a thousand male hearts, yet leaving her to die alone in an elegant garret?

'Forsooth! A melancholy plot!' flashed Jane, and chin in hand subjected herself to keen scrutiny. Assets? Large eyes, a provoking nose and well-shaped mouth. Quick wits, a gift for swift incisive speech and a reputation for intelligence beyond the average. Jane paused; *were* these last assets? Had she not been warned again and again that 'gentlemen dislike clever and learned young ladies'?

'Everything thrusts me back on matrimony!' quivered Jane with a sudden sob. 'Oh, papa, papa, why did you leave me? I need you every hour of the day.'

She checked her outburst, remembering a memorable drive with her father eighteen months ago, when, letting her see his pride in her, Dr. Welsh had begged his young daughter to fulfil his high expectations and prove herself wise as well as good; let her beware of making rash, irretrievable mistakes.

The gravely spoken words were Jane's last memory of her father; three days later Dr. Welsh was dead.

A ring at the bell. Jane peeped from a window in time to catch a glimpse of George Rennie's sleek head. Her mood changed; she smiled to herself as she smoothed her curls. It would do that self-confident young man good to be kept waiting! Poor George, stodgy, worthy, but

*not* exhilarating ! And yet Friday after Friday that minx Jane Baillie Welsh invariably put on fresh frills for his charming. Strange that Betty had not come to call her !

‘ *No need to tell Miss Jane !* ’ Mrs. Welsh whispered the words to her maid behind the visitor’s back and set herself to endure a bad quarter of an hour.

*Why* had she lacked courage to tell her daughter an item of news learnt a week before ? Above all, *why* had George Rennie called ?

Then, as she made difficult conversation, Mrs. Welsh heard Jane’s clear provocative voice :

‘ *Only* Mr. George Rennie, did you say ?—certainly I shall go down.’ She entered in a dangerous mood, casting a glance of puzzled enquiry at her mother.

George Rennie bowed and placed a chair with careful ceremony. Jane swept him a curtsy.

The courage of her ancestors rose in Grace Welsh’s breast. Gallant Sir William Wallace would never have quailed before a daughter and that daughter’s faithless lover ; the truth must be told, and swiftly.

‘ Jane, my love. Mr. Rennie has called—called to say “good-bye.” He is going to Italy.’

‘ To—Italy ! ’ Jane’s dark eyes widened, and George Rennie bowed again.

‘ When ? ’ asked Jane, aware that her heart was beating uncomfortably.

‘ Almost immediately, Miss Welsh.’

‘ I hope that this liberty, allowed by your indulgent father, will not lead to ruin,’ interposed Mrs. Welsh, but neither of the young people heard her.

‘ *Why ?* ’ asked Jane, aware of her own crudity.

'I hope to improve myself in the art of sculpture,' answered the visitor.

'Do you really intend to prosecute this stucco business as a *profession*?' cried Jane in amazement.

'Chantry says I have talent,' said the goaded young man.

'Oh, who is unwilling to believe himself a genius!' cried Jane with a trill of laughter.

George Rennie drew himself up and shot an indignant glance at his tormentor, looking so extraordinarily handsome in his wrath that Jane felt a sudden desire to weep. Winking back her tears, she wished that she could hate him. Had he dared to flirt with her all these past months? Had she *imagined* that by holding up a finger she could have had him prostrate at her feet? Italy! He was going to Italy! 'May the Devil take him there,' thought Jane fiercely.

Eager to escape, George Rennie took decorous leave of Mrs. Welsh and looked uncertainly at Jane. She held out a languid hand.

'Good-bye——'

'*Farewell!*' She mocked him as she curtsied low, shaking back her ringlets. Good God!—It was the end—he was leaving her—he had gone! She looked round the drawing-room empty of the familiar presence. Strange to think that in the future the only objects they would behold in common would be the sun and the moon!

'Jane! Jane!' wept Mrs. Welsh. 'What have you done? What have you said? I have warned you many times that gentlemen do *not* like young ladies to be clever. What have you been saying, Jane?'

Heedless of her mother, Jane dashed out of the room. His letters—she would not keep one of them. She was done with the wretch for ever. They should be returned

to him on the eve of his sailing so that it would be impossible for him to retaliate. The effrontery of him ! How could he leave her so callously, with never a regretful backward glance ? She stormed, as her trembling fingers tied up the letters she had laughed at but treasured. And yet, lying awake a few nights later, Jane listened to the roaring gale and shuddered, feeling that the elements were leagued against her. Should this quondam lover of hers be drowned she could imagine herself breaking her heart for him, forgetful of his faithlessness.

‘ O God, bring him back to Scotland safely ! ’ she prayed, then laughed aloud at her own variability and so awakened the indignant mother who was her bedfellow.

‘ Go to sleep, Jane,’ commanded Mrs. Welsh with maternal authority. ‘ I want you to look your best to-morrow when your cousin comes, and don’t forget there is packing to do. All those books sent by that uncouth Mr. Carlyle must be returned, I’ll not have them lying about the house any longer.’

‘ I’ll see to them, I promise,’ said Jane sleepily, and when reminded of her duty in the morning went blithely to scribble a note. How was the man’s name spelt ? For the life of her she could not remember.

‘ To Mr. Carlisle with Miss Welsh’s compliments and very best thanks,’ wrote Jane, and scrutinised her handiwork doubtfully. But the carrier called and the packet went.

In reply came a letter which stirred afresh the interest that had been aroused by Edward Irving’s description of his friend.

Carlyle wrote of his feeling of excitement at the arrival of the parcel, of his search for the note he felt sure had accompanied the books, and of his disappointment on dis-

covering the 'compliments to "Mr. Carlisle," a gentleman in whom small sagacity was required to detect my own representative.' He had had a hundred thousand things to tell her, but the 'compliments' had put his ideas to flight.

This was a style of correspondence after Jane's own heart. Forgetting her hurt vanity and George Rennie's still unaccountable departure from her circle, she opened one of the new books Carlyle had sent and plunged into the study of German.

Her cousin's visit seemed a boresome interlude. In Thomas Carlyle she had found a man to praise her industry, as had Edward Irving and her father. What waste of precious time it seemed to be called from her books to sing 'Home Sweet Home' to her mother's guests, each one duller than the last.

The correspondence flourished (despite expense) and Carlyle grew bolder. He must see Jane again. Might he come to Haddington? Would she write at the first possible moment saying '*La Reine le veut*'? But oh, why did she still address him as 'Mr. Carlisle'?

Jane was interested. This new friend of hers seemed more like her hero St. Preux than any other man of her acquaintance. He had undoubted talent, a vast and cultivated mind, vivid imagination, independence of soul and high principle. But *no*, he must not come to Haddington. Far, far better that their next meeting should take place in Edinburgh, where she would be free from maternal surveillance. She would stay with her old school friend Bessy Stoddart, now conveniently keeping house for an uncle, and read German with Carlyle all day long!

Jane had her way, and on a hot August day Bessy and the fat, contented bookseller uncle gave her good welcome. Thomas Carlyle was summoned and came eagerly to read

or walk with the girl as she willed ; she changed her mood a dozen times a day, bewildering him with her infinite variety, and startling him by the passion of her desires. Now, she wanted knowledge and the life of a student, now, travel and excitement—now mere gewgaws.

‘How many things are here that I cannot get !’ sighed Jane, surveying the shop windows in Princes Street.

‘How many things are here which I do not want !’ replied Thomas Carlyle sturdily.

Edward Irving broke in upon the idyll and took alarm as he watched his incalculable friends, sure that Jane Welsh was venturing into deep waters, but Carlyle laughed him to scorn.

‘Take no fear,’ he insisted. ‘She is the most fit to read German of any creature I ever met. What can harm her : Schiller has all the innocence and purity of a child with the high talents and strong volitions of a man, a rare union indeed.’ What troubled Carlyle was that Jane seemed unwilling to promise as active a correspondence as he wished.

The girl foresaw difficulties. Mrs. Welsh had shown herself restive over the interchange of letters that had already taken place, for, to her mind, Thomas Carlyle was no eligible suitor ; and there were days when the mother was always at her daughter’s elbow.

‘There can be no harm,’ urged Carlyle.

‘Not in our letters,’ admitted Jane, ‘but there is harm in deceit and disobedience. You do not know my mother, Mr. Carlyle.’

‘I have a kind of claim to converse with you,’ he insisted. ‘You are entering upon the path of literature which I have found to be as full of dangers as of beauty. Let me offer you the result of my experience.’

‘Here, I am your pupil,’ said Jane sweetly. ‘In Hadding-



ton I am Miss Welsh and my mother's daughter. Besides,' she added, in sudden truthfulness, 'to deceive her before her very face would require more audacity than I possess. Still——' She broke off hesitatingly.

'Yes ?'

'I have heard you scoff at Fame, Mr. Carlyle. It may be an empty thing, but ambition is not the crime of a low soul. Oh, if you wish me to admire—to love you——Admiration and love is with me the same feeling,' she added in hasty explanation—'*use* your precious time and the power that God has given you. Then you may exact as your due, favours you, as yet, have no claim to ask. When you have written four-and-twenty pages of your book send them to me accompanied by such a letter as my mother may read without anger. *Then, Mr. Carlyle !*'

It was the greatest concession he could win and he left her unwillingly.

Smiling over her work Jane Welsh sighed. Thomas Carlyle might have the mind of a St. Preux, but alack for his want of elegance. Rousseau had spoken truly when he said that lack of elegance was a defect that no woman could overlook. Perhaps, after all, she must look about for a nice little garret, with a fine view unobscured by town smoke, and therein settle down to immortalise that race of old maids to whom Fate seemed to decree that she should belong.

But when Jane returned home after oft-repeated summons, Fate offered her an unexpected opportunity. A queer little odd-shaped man called to bespeak her interest in the launching of a local magazine, and the girl smiled condescendingly upon him, only half-convinced that he had come on business. It seemed so much more probable that he

had fallen in love with the beautiful Miss Welsh by hearsay and had chosen this method of introducing himself into her presence.

But the little man held to his subject. He saw no reason why a magazine should not be produced in Haddington, its success merely depended upon finding suitable writers.

‘And people to read it,’ suggested Jane.

The would-be editor remained undaunted, but Jane refused to be enrolled. *She* would have nothing to do with such a venture until the success of a first number proved that it would not go to the Devil.

Miss Welsh bowed her puzzled visitor out with the withering advice that he, and the contributors he had collected, should distribute their genius among established magazines, where, if their efforts could not be admired, they might have the good fortune to pass unobserved.

Never again did an editor offer Jane the freedom of his pages.

*(To be continued.)*

## *OVER THE BLACK MOUNTAIN.*

BY ALEXANDER HENDERSON.

WHEN I was a small boy, at the beginning of the War, my nest of coloured cardboard bricks, representing the countries of Europe, began with Great Britain as the largest, which therefore was always the base of the tower one built, and finished with Montenegro, the smallest.

When I looked at the map, I saw that there too Montenegro was certainly the smallest country—just a tiny dab of purple away below Germany and Austria-Hungary.

I think it must have been the memory of that fascinating, minute dab of colour that made me want to see this Montenegro, this mountain fastness, now absorbed into one of the War's creations, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

The approach by sea, through the Bay of Kotor on the Adriatic, is the only practicable way of getting into Montenegro. There is no railway to Cetinje, the capital, and the overland route is long and laborious. But even when one has reached Kotor there is still much to be done. On the map it looks as though the port and the Montenegrin capital were only some six miles apart. If one were a crow, that is all the distance would be. Unfortunately a mountain gets in the way, the famous Mount Lovćen. To surmount this grandiose threshold to a small country involves a drive of probably twenty miles, mostly round hairpin-bends which the Montenegrin drivers negotiate by what they take to be nicely controlled skidding.

To the passenger, as one bend follows another with a

monotonous regularity of risk, such driving appears neither nice nor controlled. Showers of stones and gravel, ground out by the wheels, shoot down into the valley. Each skid sounds more perilous than the last. The air gets colder and colder. Fluttering rags of mist, chill as ice, slap one in the face. Wretched-looking urchins proffer minuscule bunches of drooping wild flowers. A sentry, with fixed bayonet, gazes inquisitively after you, probably wondering whether you are likely to give him any trouble by falling over the edge of a precipice or getting mixed up with a bandit or two.

I doubt whether there are any serious brigands in Montenegro now, but as recently as ten years ago there were said to be 5,000 miscellaneous ruffians roaming about these desolate mountains. So desolate are they indeed, that I almost wished a few bandits would turn up, just to give the sentry and ourselves a little excitement in our monotonous lives. At last, at a height of about 6,000 feet, one reaches the crest. In June there was still plenty of snow along the road.

Actually, despite the cold and the mountain mist, the drive up Mount Lovćen gave one a quite peculiar pleasure. The steep, sometimes perpendicular fall of the rock-face, the view of the distant sea far below, crinkled but flat, like blue crêpe paper, the quick ascent into more rarefied air, the rush of wind past the motor-car—all combined to produce that particular *griserie du matin*, that light-headedness which one gets by going for a long walk early in the morning without first breaking one's fast. In driving rapidly up mountain roads it is essential that one should submit oneself to the sensations of this special kind of movement—to the deep-throated roar of the engine in bottom gear as it doggedly growls up the steeper slopes ; the outward swinging of one's

body, like a pendulum, as the car swirls round a corner ; the sense of grandeur, magnificence, might, as one surveys the minute, toiling mortals in the distant valley, or the insignificant cockle-shells floating in the bay ; the comradeship with the hawk or eagle that hovers in the air on a level with oneself, or above one's head, but not far above it ; the sense of release from the slow, plodding roads of every day ; the privileged admittance to the stern, royal world of ice, snow, air, rock, sky and sun.

The sum total of these sensations is a kind of intoxicated pride, careless and ecstatic, a state of mind which has been well expressed by the Dalmatian poet Vladimir Nazor in his *Turris Eburnea*, of which I translate the first stanza :

*Here where the eagles battle with the shouting storms,  
And glaciers glitter over darkling straits,  
High in the mountain wind with pride my spirit warms,  
In my keep of topaz towers and ebony gates.*

To feel precisely the true emotion one needs to have snow and, if possible, a glacier or two, so that one can know the icy wind as well as the sun, and contemplate the scales of ice, whity-grey, smoky and green, on the hard stone slopes of the mountains. There were, alas, no glaciers on Mount Lovćen, but those heaps of snow in the shadowed ruts and hollows, still unmelted in June, were just enough. One was grateful for that snow.

This mountain was, until the Great War, supposed to make Montenegro secure against invasion. But in the winter of 1915 the Austro-German armies succeeded in climbing it. It was this circumstance which cut the retreating Serbian armies off from the sea at Kotor, and forced them to make the terrible march through Albania before they could be shipped to Corfu.

From the summit of Mount Lovćen the road is a long,

winding, gradual descent to Cetinje, which lies in a wide, shallow, saucer-like depression in the hills, amidst a landscape of sombre grey and green.

Here then, all about me, was Montenegro, the object of my journey, that smallest dab of colour on my childhood's map of Europe, the smallest and appropriately the topmost of my tower of cardboard cubes. It was not, in its physical reality, a very bright dab of colour. A gloomy olive green would have symbolised it better than the spot of purple I remembered. The land seemed old, wizened, remote, like a man who has dwelt alone in a tumble-down cottage for many years. Here and there were puddles, ponds in the dark fields, bony cattle standing alone or in twos, now and then a single-storied, dirtily whitewashed shack. The road wound slowly downwards through the gloomy fields, under a grey sky that wrapped itself smokily about the higher peaks of the mountains that fenced in this hollow. Women, as wizened as the land itself, hoed potato patches, neat, rectangular and small. Low walls dividing the fields were of stone, stones lay on the sparse grass, on the road, looking in colour like solid excretions of the thick, whitish-grey sky. The motor-car bumped and lurched painfully.

Montenegro, celebrated setting for comic operas, above all of that *Merry Widow* which even now distresses the Jugoslavs, so that it has been banned in Zagreb, the remote, mountainous country whose motto was generally supposed to be 'Freedom is a noble thing,' seemed singularly disappointing.

Perhaps expectation had been too great. Certainly I had not anticipated that Montenegro would appear so poverty-stricken. The Scottish Highlands are not fertile country, but they do not depress the soul as this land did. There, houses, cattle, men, have a solidity, substance; here, they

appeared flimsy, makeshift, petty. I began to understand the Montenegrin passion for freedom—it was the only thing of which they had an ample supply.

A dismal, grey-green light seemed to settle out of the cloudy sky on to the fields, the rocks, the whitewashed houses of Cetinje, now visible below us. It was as though the whole saucer-like hollow lay beneath a film of scum, such as that which forms a skin on stagnant water. Only on the horizon, where the smoky mountain peaks hunched themselves against a whity-blue sky, had the film of darkness been scraped away.

At last we drove slowly into the main street of Cetinje greeted by the vacant, suspiciously inquisitive stare of a bunch of men standing at the corner. We passed down a dusty road, between low, whitewashed dwellings, mostly of one story only. One received the impression of driving through some raw new mining town of the far West of Canada or the United States.

Unexpectedly the sun thrust aside the clouds, and suddenly the houses and the dusty street glared bone-white in the bright light, making one knit one's brows against the sudden brilliance. Along the street were two or three cafés, under the sun-blinds of which bored soldiers lounged over newspapers and coffee. They lolled back in their chairs, flicked flies with their canes, or stood in the doorways in crumpled, untidy, badly cut uniforms. There was a kiosk where one could buy the dry, loosely packed Yugoslav cigarettes, and picture postcards a few years out of date, and there was the house where was born the victim of the Marseilles assassination, the late King Alexander of Yugoslavia. It was one of the better-class houses in the town: it had two stories, a tiled roof and a rather shabby wooden porch.

Standing about in the shade of a few trees, or moving

idly in the sun, waiting for the visitor to photograph them, were numbers of Montenegrins garbed in operatic blue and red, with silver-mounted pistols stuck in their sashes.

The Montenegrins have the habit of letting off their pistols into the air out of *joie de vivre* and excitement at the end of any celebration, meeting, wedding party, or other such occasion. This sometimes has unfortunate consequences if any police happen to be in the neighbourhood, because one of the shooting party is almost certain to have a vague idea of what firing into the air means, and should a policeman feel menaced, he is certain to use his pistol, taking care *not* to fire into the air. And that means, at the end of the skirmish, very possibly half a dozen killed and numbers of wounded.

In June, 1936, there was a case of that kind. A group of several hundred Montenegrin peasants were marching towards Cetinje to hold a demonstration for the release of some members of their clan imprisoned earlier in the year for shooting five gendarmes. Police came out of Cetinje to head off the demonstrators. The peasants, since they were not allowed to enter the capital, held their meeting in a field outside, while the police stood by and watched. All went well until the end of the meeting, when the police, hearing pistols being fired off, conceived that they were being attacked, and fired back. Result: eight demonstrators killed, thirty wounded.

Outwardly, Cetinje is to-day very little different from what it was before the War. A visitor to the town in 1910 described it thus :

‘ It was about the size of a good big English village, with a population of less than 2,000 inhabitants. The Royal Palace was a plain whitewashed house of two stories, and looked like a substantial English country inn. The Bank



of Montenegro was an impressive building about the size of a labourer's cottage. . . . At the post office I asked for a stamp of the value of  $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ , in order to send a letter to England. I was told that they were unfortunately out of stamps of the value of  $\frac{1}{2}d.$ ,  $1d.$ , and  $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ , but that there was no need to worry as there would be a new issue in about a fortnight ! The men are not partial to any form of work, except war, so that material progress of any considerable kind is impossible. Even if they did help their womenfolk to cultivate the land, they could make but little of the unproductive soil. The national industry of war, however, can always be practised with the neighbouring Albanian tribes, who are usually spoiling for a fight and loathe the Montenegrins' (R. G. D. Laffan : *The Guardians of the Gate*, Oxford, 1918).

Despite its infertile soil and the laziness of its male inhabitants, Cetinje has discovered a form of progress. It now has a Grand Hotel and a summer trade in tourists. Moreover, it has a museum—the former Royal Palace. This 'substantial English country inn,' built apparently of wood, has the distinction of containing what is probably a greater number of bad pictures of minor royalty than are to be found in any other palace in Europe.

Cetinje is no longer the largest town in Montenegro, that position being held by Podgorica, which lies on the River Zeta, about eight miles from the Albanian frontier. Here the National Assembly met after the War to vote for the inclusion of Montenegro in the new Yugoslav state.

It was a long journey along the winding mountain road from Cetinje to Podgorica. We drove first to Rijeka, a village not far from Lake Scutari, which lies athwart the frontier of Montenegro and Albania. Along this stretch of the route one learned beyond the possibility of forgetting why this land was called the Black Mountain. These ranges

had a peculiar quality of loneliness, desolation and barrenness which it would be difficult to parallel in Europe. Even on a sunny day, one felt, the dominant blackish-grey and dull green of the rocks and sparse trees would prevent much cheerfulness from ever coming into the scene. And to-day was wet and overcast. Equally depressing to the spirit were the desperate efforts of the Montenegrins to make the best of their stony land by cultivating the most minute patches of soil. A psychological gloom was added to the physical. Wherever the mountain-face was broken by a horizontal ledge, there was always a garden patch. Even if it were so small that it would grow only a couple of lettuces, nevertheless it was cultivated. Sometimes there would be a plot big enough for rye or oats, but for the most part one saw only handfuls of potatoes, onions and other garden vegetables. The disproportion between the size of these little pocket-handkerchiefs of green, so neat and tidy, and the vast wilderness of the mountains made the labour of the Montenegrins seem pathetic in its courage.

In the later afternoon we approached the northern end of Lake Scutari, a considerable stretch of water about eighteen miles long and seven miles wide at the point where it is crossed by the Albanian frontier. The mountains rise steeply from the lakeside, and at this time of day they cast a long shadow over the grey-green water, so that the wan light fell only on the farther shore. Far into the distance, first green, then smoky grey, then blue, the mountains rolled, peak behind peak, solitary, cold and silent.

The stillness and loneliness of these mountains was indeed such that the silence was not the mere absence of sound, but rather, it seemed, an actual presence of some vibration, some emanation given off by the earth and sky. As I stood on the rock-edge and looked down on the dark water where

a fishing-boat motionlessly floated, it seemed to me that I felt something in the air, as it might be the fall of invisibly fine particles of snow or dust. I turned my face to the sky and listened, my nerves uncommonly alert . . . There was nothing. There was only the silence. At last it became uncomfortable to listen. Now I *heard* the silence. It became louder and louder. It drummed into the mind. I was frightened.

The falling, invisible fine particles of the silence became an infinite army of years that murmured with a blind, mechanic persistence : Before Man was, We were ; after Man has been, We shall be. The silence came from a world older than coal or iron ; it was the dark, monstrous silence of the world before our history, of a world made only of rocks and water, light and darkness.

From Lake Scutari, our route now lay along the Albanian frontier to Podgorica, on the same road as that taken by the Serbian troops in their 1915 retreat. We reached the town late in the evening, after dark, and in pouring rain. This region along the Albanian frontier is subject to floods, especially in spring when the snow melts in the mountains. Drainage systems are hardly of the most efficient in these Balkan towns and villages, and an ordinary downpour had turned the main street of Podgorica to mud. Because of the cold rain we were glad to get into shelter, whatever the quality of it. The bedroom offered was a kind of wooden shack, supported on posts and projecting from the back of an ancient inn. To reach it one had to clamber up a rickety flight of wooden steps which were fixed to the side of the main building. The room, lit by candles, contained three beds and an iron wash-stand, and was hung with dusty peasant tapestries which looked as though they had housed infinite generations of vermin. There was also a worm-

eaten cupboard, the door of which had become paralysed in a half-open position, apparently because the hinges had rusted into solid immobility. It was impossible to put anything into the cupboard, and equally impossible to remove anything that might already have been there. Seldom, I think, have I encountered an object of greater uselessness.

On my bed, fortunately made of iron, was a quilt of what appeared to be the same age and to have the same qualities as the tapestries. It was thin, flaccid and greasy. It was the prototype of every quilt that the hero of Gogol's *Dead Souls* found at every inn in Russia. When I read that novel as a boy it had always mystified me that the bed-clothes, and particularly the quilt, of inns all over Russia should be of so repulsive a quality that the traveller had to throw them on to the floor ; above all, why the quilt was always *greasy*. So odd an epithet it seemed ! And how the oddity of it made one's flesh creep ! *Thin* and *greasy*. It was always the same. Now at last I understood. Here, at this Montenegrin inn in Podgorica, the quilt was just as Gogol had said. It was thin and *greasy*. Not spotted with grease, simply greasy all over, through and through, penetrated by the odours of cooking, of garlic-and-brandy-soaked breath, greasy from the touch of innumerable hands of sleepers and chamber-maids through twenty years.

I shuddered at the sight and feel of it, rubbing my hands and fingers together a little nervously. Then suddenly I laughed. I rejoiced that I had read Gogol's novel, for through it I knew how to deal with the quilt : ' Throwing the greasy quilt on the floor, he hopped into bed and was asleep in a trice.' That was what the hero of Gogol's novel always did.

I threw the greasy quilt on the floor. I pulled back the sheet, and risking my future in every other Balkan inn,

sprinkled the entire contents of my tin of insect powder thickly over the mattress. That bed, I thought, should be safe for travellers for several decades to come.

I slept soundly and unscathed.

A. H.

‘NO BETTER HOPE.’ . . .

*No better hope can come to me  
Than to fare forth on a sightless sea,  
Far from the earth, under the sky  
Where every earthly hope must lie.*

*No deeper wish shall I ever know  
Than to be lost where lost winds blow,  
Far from the houses and fields of men  
In waters green beyond their ken.*

*No truer love my love shall hold  
Than those cold streams whose heart hath rolled  
Through unrecked ages the loosened stones  
Round homeless shores, like fossil bones.*

*No drowsy requiem, chant, or bell  
Shall swing my spirit to Heaven or Hell,  
But the sun upon a glassy sea  
Shall shine his empty peace on me.*

*And I shall drift in the middle deep,  
With water over and under my sleep,  
While earth's fair cities are burned or drowned  
With never an echo, never a sound.*

FREYA STARK.

Asolo.

## *THE DETECTIVE IN FICTION—AND IN FACT.*

BY HENRY T. F. RHODES.

It is quite easy to understand the popular taste for the thriller or the romance. Their object is to make a way of escape from reality, and who does not wish to escape from it sometimes? But the public appetite, which is quite as keen, for the detective story is a more difficult thing to analyse. It need be neither romantic nor thrilling in the ordinary sense of those terms. Of course, most detective stories have some thrill and some romance, but that is quite a different thing. No one, for instance, would accuse Conan Doyle of trying to hypnotise his readers with sex-appeal; and very few of his stories are thrilling by contemporary standards, yet he still remains something more than readable.

Essentially the detective story purports to be the anti-thesis of the thriller and the romance. It seems to deal with the real world of fact and induction. Perhaps that is the reason for its popularity. It introduces the reader to what appears to be a real situation, and invites his co-operation in solving the problem arising out of it. This at least is true of the best detective stories of to-day. If life and criminal investigation are so interesting, surely it is worth living. That is the reaction of the reader. The question we have to try and answer is whether criminal investigation is like that in reality.

There is a tradition among writers of detective fiction which persists. Edgar Allan Poe originated it when he made the professional detective a foil for the brilliant amateur. The persistence of this legend is very curious.

No one ever thinks of writing a book demonstrating the superiority of the quack doctor over the professional physician, or one suggesting that literary men ought to build bridges, but, according to this odd tradition, almost anyone is a better detective than the professional policeman. In extreme cases he is portrayed not only as professionally incompetent, but as mentally defective as well.

Tradition dies hard, but it has not the life in it which it had in Conan Doyle's hey-day. The egregious Inspector Lestrade, and Jones, that imbecile in his profession (as Sherlock Holmes said), do not figure so largely in detective fiction as they did in times past. But there are some contemporary writers who keep them alive. Dr. Austin Freeman is one.

It goes almost without saying that in all good modern work the cruder improbabilities, the miraculous coincidence, the policemen who do and say things which no policeman ever would do or say, have disappeared. Dr. Freeman's improbabilities are not of that order. But these are all the more insidious because, theoretically, they are not improbabilities at all. The author, a medical man himself, dramatises the work of the medico-legist with great skill. His technique is meticulously described. We observe Dr. Thorndyke with his microscope, section-cutter, and chemical reagents solving his problems in the laboratory under the noses of at first incredulous and finally astounded police officers. Some of them are more stupidly obscurantist and reactionary in their methods than Inspector Lestrade and more offensively patronising to this new Sherlock Holmes than ever Lestrade was to the old one.

The object of this device is to emphasise the new phase in the detection of crime—the remarkable results achieved by the interpretation of circumstantial evidence by scientific

methods. They make absorbing reading with skilful handling. And perhaps the imbecile police officer is the best device for this type of the detective fiction writer's art. It points the moral, underlines the argument, and so saves the reader a good deal of trouble. Also, he gets vicarious satisfaction which some of us as undergraduates used to experience, in fact, when we captured the policeman's helmet. 'No mercy for the police,' *Punch* used to say good-humouredly in the nineties; 'they have few friends.' When without risk of fine or imprisonment we see the official force discomfited, the old Adam in every law-abiding citizen is appeased.

But the factual picture is very different in several respects. Dr. Thorndyke's scientific work is admirably described with great accuracy. The things that he does really are done in the modern laboratory of technical police. In *The Case of Oscar Brodski* he tells us how his medico-legist hero discovered some threads of a textile fabric between the teeth of the unfortunate Brodski. Under the microscope they turned out to be strands of wool, red, yellow, and blue. Later in the house to which Dr. Thorndyke's inferences had led him, the rather slow-witted Christopher Jarvis, M.D., his assistant, and an incredulous inspector of police, they find among other highly incriminating objects a tablecloth of red, yellow, and blue wool which had been used to suffocate the victim.

We carried out an investigation in Lyon a few years ago of a comparable kind. An old woman was found murdered on the outskirts of the town. She had been strangled with a cord. On her clothing and on the neck were found fibres of red and blue silk. This suggested that a pyjama cord might have been used.

And so it turned out. Three days after the discovery of



the body we arrested a man there was reason to suspect. Fibres of red and blue silk corresponding with those found on the body adhered to his clothing. We found the pyjama cord in the pocket of his jacket. On this and other evidence subsequently collected he was tried and convicted.

Hairs quite as much as fibres are grist to Dr. Thorndyke's mill. He was able by means of a microscopical examination to detect rabbit hairs in the charred remains found in the grate of the sitting-room where the crime was committed. These corresponded to a grey felt hat mysteriously absent from the neighbourhood of the corpse found on the railway line. This was additional evidence of the location of the murder.

In practice the examination and diagnosis of hairs is frequently made. A hair discovered by Thorndyke on the horn of a cow in another of his famous cases proved to be one which had been bleached with hydrogen peroxide, originally being dark chestnut. It was matched with the hair of a victim who had been killed in a railway carriage in mysterious circumstances, and as the result of an extraordinary accident. The same thing is done in fact. It is possible to identify hairs and match them, to determine if they have been bleached or dyed.

In what way does the scientific detective of fiction differ from the actuality? It seems as if he used the same methods, and in general drew the same conclusions from the facts he discovered. His chemistry and medicine are unimpeachable, his inductive powers at once cautious and precise. In what respects then do fact and fiction differ?

The answer is really very simple. The Dr. Thorndykes of our generation would be more convincing if they were not so infallible. It looks beautiful on paper to see the research worker in the laboratory solving the problem by a

process of pure induction, but it very seldom occurs in fact. Scientific technique is essential to the progress of detective methods, but it does not generally suffice of itself. In *The Case of Oscar Brodski* the affair is taken out of the hands of the police altogether; the medico-legist, infallible and omnipotent, takes control and tells the inspector in charge of the case where (to use a colloquial expression) he is to get off.

Even scientific men sometimes make mistakes. I recall a curious affair which took place in Berlin some years ago. A number of people had been found at different times dead in their motor-cars with signs of having died of asphyxia. They had been robbed, but there were no signs of violence and nothing to suggest that death was other than natural. The police, however, were suspicious, and a careful search of the clothing revealed in each case minute fragments of thin glass. These were submitted to the laboratory, who reported that the glass had no unusual characteristics and that it contained traces of arsenic which was quite common in glass. They attached no importance to its presence.

But in fact it was vitally important. The ingenious murderer had devised a method of filling small glass bulbs with arsine, a highly toxic gas, under pressure. His method was to approach motor-cars of rich people returning from the night clubs as they drew up before their homes and to throw one of these bulbs into the window. On striking anything it burst and liberated the gas, which was sufficient to asphyxiate even a healthy person in a confined space. The traces of arsenic associated with the glass were not natural impurity, but due to the residue of the gas.

In this instance, the laboratory, correct in its technical facts, was quite wrong in its deductions. And if it had not been for the inspired guess of an inspector attached to the

Murder Commission in Berlin (who had no technical knowledge of scientific methods at all) the truth about the affair might never have come to light.

The scientific detective of fiction never makes mistakes like this. His mind is a perfect piece of inductive machinery. In his methodology theory and practice are completely harmonised. The author is quite honest in assuming this. He is merely doing what every artist is entitled to do in portraying what might and perhaps ought to be the case. Tales of this kind hold the reader's attention just because they are almost (but not quite) too good to be true.

For it does occasionally happen that a criminal problem is solved, or an arrest made, by a process of pure induction from collateral fact.

During the War, a waistcoat was found in suspicious circumstances near the Suez Canal. The following observations were made :

(1) It was new, and bore a tailor's name and address in Batavia.

(2) Part of the lining was stained with perspiration, but the stain ceased abruptly at a seam in the lining.

(3) The waistcoat was impregnated with chlorides of sodium potassium, with sulphates and compounds of magnesium and calcium.

(4) Each pocket contained a small quantity of quartz sand with rounded grains of uniform size.

It was deduced that the owner of the waistcoat had bought a ready-made suit of clothes at Batavia. The perspiration stain suggested that an old piece of cloth had been used to line a new waistcoat. This suggested a new ready-made suit rather than one bought second hand.

The man had travelled to Egypt in a Dutch steamer passing through Suez, because only Dutch steamers called at Batavia.

He had left the steamer secretly by diving overboard and swimming ashore. The chlorides of sodium, calcium and magnesium with which the waistcoat was heavily charged showed that it had been soaked in sea water. The landing had been made at a place on the shore where there were sand-dunes. This was revealed by the nature of the sand in the pockets.

This is the kind of affair which seems to justify the scientific detective of fiction. The essential difference is that what happens occasionally in fact is the normal occurrence in this brand of romance of detection and crime.

Dorothy Sayers is another author who makes the most effective use of scientific discovery in the service of her art. There is a sense in which she has revived an old tradition, giving it a modern and original twist. Many detective stories of the nineties and hundreds rely for their excitement upon some aspect of the old Hue and Cry. The hunters set out in pursuit of their prey. It is a battle of wits in which the pursuers do not come easily or quickly to the end of the journey. Those curious stories by Farjeon of which *Devlin the Barber* is a typical example illustrate this point. In a way these tales are closer to reality than the scientific romances. The machinery of detection is far from infallible. Brought to earth in the last chapter, the quarry has had a run for his money, and has used his wits to some purpose, as indeed the criminal often does. In the scientific detective story of what we might call the middle period the criminal has no chance of escape. He pits himself against a machine of infallible and deadly accuracy.

But Dorothy Sayers's criminals are a modern product who have learnt the scientific tricks of the trade. Their cunning is not that of the hunted animal. They outwit the agents of an outraged society by the utilisation of knowledge acquired

in the laboratory and lecture room. Let us consider as one example the strange affair of *The Documents in the Case*.

The documents were, in fact, less important than the mushrooms. From a technical point of view the story turns on the properties of an alkaloid known as muscarine. It is highly toxic, and exists in a natural state in a toadstool with a brilliant red cap known as *agaricus muscarius*. The murderer conceives the notion of giving his victim a meal of mushrooms upon which a small quantity of muscarine had been sprinkled. Death follows quickly upon this devilish experiment. A doctor is summoned and an autopsy takes place. Of course, the analyst finds muscarine. This, however, is at first attributed to a misfortune by no means unknown in such circumstances; a toadstool has become mixed with the genuine mushrooms.

On the face of it, it looks like the perfect crime. There is no mystery regarding its author, nor of the nature and quality of his act once the reader begins to suspect—as he does very soon—that there was more in these mushrooms, as it were, than met the eye. The problem is not one of the identity of the person. The reader's suspense hangs upon the answer to the question, How is the crime going to be proved? Who will win in this battle of scientific wits?

The law prevails with the aid of science. Incomplete scientific knowledge is a dangerous thing for a murderer. The muscarine he used was artificially prepared, and artificial muscarine differs from the natural product in its optical properties. There is a laboratory scene in which the analyst tests an extract of the mushrooms in a polariscope. He finds it is optically inactive, a property which distinguishes the artificial from the natural alkaloid. The problem is solved: the fact of murder scientifically established.

Theoretically we can find no fault with this. It is per-

fectly true that the two types of muscarine can be distinguished in this way. But all the same, there is a difference between what is theoretically true and practically possible. There are technical difficulties in the use of the polariscope for a test of this kind for the examination of small quantities of optically active substances. It is very doubtful if, in the circumstances, the test described could have been absolutely conclusive.

The fact is that, in reality, the march of science has benefited the criminal as well as the detective, although fortunately not to an equal extent. Crime is a much more expert business than it was formerly. In the case of the murder by poison, it is only those who make mistakes who are discovered. There are disquieting indications that poisoners do not always make mistakes. A woman has recently been charged in Brussels with poisoning fifteen people with digitalin. It is a legitimate inference that she might have poisoned fourteen and escaped the consequences of this orgy of murder. If we reduce the attempt to one upon the life of a single individual, the chances of discovery approach vanishing-point.

Arsenic has been called the fool's poison. It is probably true that the majority of arsenical poisoners are detected. But again Dorothy Sayers presents us with a portrait in *Strong Poison* of a man who had brought the manipulation of arsenic as a lethal agent to a fine art.

Arsenic, which has been the death of so many, is the life of others. The three grains or less which normally kill can be taken by some people as a sort of reviver before breakfast. The confirmed arsenic-eater would, in fact, die if deprived of his dose of arsenic which might be sufficient to kill five ordinary people. I have personal knowledge of a case in which ten grains was taken without adverse effect, and I

have been credibly informed that there are exceptional individuals who can ingest twenty grains without injury.

This is what Urquhart, villain of *Strong Poison*, did. Over a period of years he accustomed himself to larger and larger doses of arsenic. When the time was ripe he shared an omelet, charged with the poison, with his victim.

The victim dies ; the murderer, of course, is unaffected. An autopsy reveals a fatal dose of arsenic. Suspicion falls upon the heroine, for the police rather naturally do not suspect the omelet which two men shared and finished and one survived. There is a trial and the jury fortunately disagree. During the month's respite Lord Peter Wimsey carries out one of his inimitable investigations and the truth comes out.

The poisoner with arsenic can and does give the police a great deal of anxiety. Arsenic may be the fool's poison, but it is a dangerous weapon in the hands of the man who understands its properties. Carefully administered it produces symptoms easily mistaken, even by a skilled physician, for those of natural disease. In this country, at least, the doctor is in a very difficult position even if he suspects poisoning. Incredible as it seems, etiquette and the law of libel or slander forbid him to go to the police on account of mere suspicion, however well founded.

Such stories as *Strong Poison* fulfil a significant social purpose. An analysis of them reveals the width of the gulf fixed between theory and practice, but in principle they are sound. Urquhart as a type reveals truly enough what can be done with a common toxic agent in knowledgeable and unscrupulous hands. The fact that there is no recorded instance, as far as I know, of a murder being committed by this method makes no difference. It is a disagreeable surmise, but probably an accurate one that a crime of this kind

would escape detection. *Strong Poison* opens with the trial of the woman wrongfully accused. To make the story possible she had to be acquitted or the jury must disagree. They disagreed. On the evidence, the chances of such a thing occurring would be about ten thousand to one.

And what of the detectives themselves of fiction and of fact? We must say at once that most detectives of fiction are as no detective ever was on land or sea. There is a variety in their characters and personality not to be found in the real thing. Detective officers are cut very much to a pattern; even their nationality makes less difference than it does in many other walks of life. Dr. Thorndyke, in the correct tradition of scientific detectives, is not a human being but a machine. He even lacks the vanity, and the vices, which make Sherlock Holmes credible (and likeable) as a personality.

Severe critics have suggested that Miss Sayers's Peter Wimsey is appropriately named, and the interesting feature of Miss Allingham's Albert Campion is that he pretends to an imbecility which is the natural characteristic of the professional police officer of fiction. But his pale-blue eyes and vacuous expression are a mask for an acute and subtle brain.

This brings us to the third type of detective story appropriately represented by Freemans Wills Crofts. The brilliant amateur does not appear in them; the man from Scotland Yard takes the centre of the stage. Crofts and those whom he has inspired are realists, the Flauberts of the detective story.

Most modern writers acquaint themselves with police organisation and practice. But when it comes to the point they cannot resist the temptation of sacrificing technical accuracy to the exigencies of a literary situation. Nor are they to be blamed. The detective story is not intended to be a treatise in police technology. But it is one of the most



remarkable achievements of Mr. Crofts and his school that they never yield to this temptation. The stories are realistic not only in the sense that no technical device is used by the investigators which could not be and is not used in fact, but the police officers themselves are portraits faithfully and accurately drawn.

Inspector Burnley, who investigated the difficult affair of the Cask, is an instance. He pursues his investigation calmly and methodically. He constructs no theories, makes no inspired guesses. It is doubtful if he knows the exact meaning of the word induction. But he goes on collecting facts.

‘Inspector Burnley was nothing if not thorough. He questioned in turn the winch drivers, the engineers, even the cook, and before six o’clock had interviewed every man that had sailed on the *Bullfinch* from Rouen. The results were unfortunately entirely negative. . . . Puzzled but not disheartened, Inspector Burnley drove back to Scotland Yard, his mind full of the mysterious happenings and his pocket book stored with all kinds of facts about the *Bullfinch*, her cargo, and crew.’

But Inspector Burnley does not neglect scientific methods. In search of the elusive cask he notes traces on a wall which indicate that a short ladder has been placed against it. The outer side of the wall is scratched, the inner side marked with mud. The inspector reconstructs. A ladder has been placed just against the outer and then against the inner side of the wall, but with the opposite end up. He examines two footprints. They are only nineteen inches apart. One is complete, the other an impression of the heel only. The heel-marks belong to the same boot as the complete impression. This means that the second prints correspond to a second journey over the same ground. The picture is an accurate one of a detective at work on the field with lens and

tape-measure examining traces and footprints, and making his deductions on the basis of training, experience and common sense.

The inspector then goes back to his patient enquiries, the painstaking sifting of evidence. He is led off on false scents down blind alleys ; he has to retrace his steps and begin again.

Part of the scene of this classic detective story is set in France. The author has evidently studied French police methods as well as our own, for he does not produce that travesty of the French detective which some authors and film producers have popularised. M. Charcot, Chief of the Sûreté, does not excitedly pace the room and give instructions to a dozen subordinates all at once. Calmly and dispassionately he reviews the evidence and with the help of his English colleague puts enquiries on foot which are carefully followed up.

In this type of narrative, as with Miss Sayers's, the author does not exhaust every known device to conceal the identity of the criminal until the last page but one. The reader is taken fully into the confidence of the investigator and can follow every move of the game. The author has faith in the reader which experience has justified. He believes that a technical interest in the tale will carry his reader on.

The realistic detective story has come to stay. A recent example of its development is to be found in *Murder off Miami*, by Dennis Wheatley. This is a new departure in which documental realism has been taken to the *n*th power. It is in the form of a report of the detective in charge of the case to his chief at headquarters, faithfully reproduced to the cablegrams, the typewriting, the photographs, and even to exhibits of hair, match-sticks, and fragments of material carrying suspicious stains. The detective in charge is

baffled. But his chief is not. In a sealed part of the dossier at the end of the book he comments on the evidence and reveals the identity of the murderer. Before breaking the seal the reader is invited to provide a solution where the detective has failed.

The *dénouement* of this tale is surprising and original, but even the realism is more apparent than real. In their wording the reports are a model of authenticity, the photographs and exhibits are arranged as they might be in a real dossier. But readers acquainted with police methods will not be deceived. There is an omission in routine of which no detective in reality would have been guilty. Curiously enough, this omission arouses a suspicion in the knowledgeable reader's mind which a correct procedure might have allayed.

There is another side to the picture. Whilst the fiction writer makes use of practical knowledge, the expert in police technology sometimes acknowledges his debt to the detective of fiction. Dr. Edmond Locard, one of my professors at Lyon, was among the pioneers of the examination and classification of dusts. He used to tell us that Conan Doyle's detective stories had done a great deal to inspire early investigators in this field. Conan Doyle certainly did a great service to the science of criminal investigation by painting a factual if theoretical picture of what could be done by the technical examination of traces, stains, and dust. Like many contemporary detective writers, he owed a great deal of his factual material to Hans Gross, that classical exponent of criminological science, but his training in forensic medicine made him see more clearly than did many professional policemen of his time the almost unlimited field which the scientific interpretation of evidence would open up.

Taking it by and large, the real and the fictional detective

have been very useful to each other. Doctors Conan Doyle and Freeman as examples of exponents of the scientific machinery of detection drew upon available factual material, but they have also helped to popularise ideas which research workers in this field have actually applied to real problems. It is less easy to see in what way Miss Sayers and her school make a contribution to the real world of detection and crime, but in fact she draws attention to the significant problem of the crime which may never be found out.

Realists of the type of which Crofts is an eminent example build up their narratives with the same slow care and skill which the real detective is obliged to apply in practice to a complicated case. He also manages to produce a picture of the investigating officer of that ideal type which Hans Gross, in a professional connection, depicts by way of precept and example. This professor of criminology and magistrate had an infectious enthusiasm for his profession which has been the inspiration of many young men on the beat in every country in Europe. But it is not the detective only who blesses his name. He has been the greatest single influence upon detective story writers from the time of Conan Doyle until now.

However else we may regard them from a professional point of view, the detective or technical police expert—if they ever do read detective stories—cannot deny them a greater realism and authenticity than they ever had in times past. For this very reason, the best work is finding its true place in the literature of our time, demanding the respect of amateurs, both of letters and of criminal investigation.

## THE PAVEMENT.

(*Adhaesit pavimento anima mea.*)

BY D. K. BROSTER.

### I.

‘THERE’s the bell, Lyddy,’ said the bent old man, looking up from his newspaper. ‘That’ll be the third lot this week, won’t it?’

The little grey wisp of a woman standing by the dresser in the cottage living-room made no reply. But her hand, outstretched to hang up a teacup, was arrested thus for a moment, like a statue’s. Then the blue cup swung on to its hook, and another after it.

The bell, naked in the dark corner by the hearth, jangled anew.

‘If you don’t show yourself, happen they’ll go away again,’ admonished the reader.

Lydia Reid turned round from the dresser—small, old, faded, ordinary, save for her eyes. ‘Happen I’d as lief they did,’ she retorted.

‘Ah, you’re tired, Lyddy! It must be tedious hot out there to-day, I know. All the same, you do love to show it, don’t ye now?’

‘You know I do, Simon—to the right folk. But these . . . I’m not so sure . . .’ Her gaze travelled to the old-fashioned black bonnet hanging at the side of the dresser. Yet she made no motion to take it down.

‘But, drat it, woman, you don’t know who they are!’ exclaimed her brother, exasperated. ‘There, go, for good-

ness' sake, if you're going !' For once more the bell gave tongue, and it was clear that the hand which pulled the wire was impatient.

Yet the old woman stood a few seconds, gazing now at the oscillating bell as though that could tell her what she wanted to know. Then, jerking down the rusty bonnet, she put it on, tied the strings, took a key from a corner of the dresser, and, plucking open the cottage door, went out into the August sunshine.

Visitors to the Roman pavement at Chasely usually waited by the gate at the end of the flower-bordered pathway leading to the custodian's cottage. The bell-pull to summon that individual hung from a pole lashed to the gate-post, so why give oneself the trouble of walking up the path unnecessarily ? It seldom occurred to visitors that its presence also saved Simon Reid and his sister the annoyance of raps upon their door and of voices asking, ' Do we come here to see the Pavement ? ' and, ' Is there any charge ? '

Of course there was a charge ! Was it to be supposed that an old woman of seventy-four was going to leave her warm fireside in winter or brave the shadeless sunshine in summer, and go nearly a quarter of a mile to unlock the shed which covered the Pavement, spend an unspecified time in explaining the mosaics, point out where the heating flues used to run and other details—and this very likely to a set of ignoramuses who only made silly jokes—all for nothing ? It was not likely, especially when she and her half-crippled brother were entitled to the whole of the money paid for admission, since the Pavement stood upon their land—upon the pitiful and shrunken remnant of what had been the many-acred farm which their forbears had owned for some ten generations ?

It was in their grandfather's time that the ploughshare

had brought to light this relic of those still more distant owners of Romano-British days. A learned antiquarian of the neighbourhood, hearing of what had been turned up on Farmer Reid's land at Chasely, had hastened to the spot, held forth to that Sussex worthy of the distinction which the discovery conferred upon his property, superintended its further uncovering, induced him (not without difficulty) to erect a shelter above the treasure in order to preserve it from the elements, and wrote an article upon it in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1798 which gave the impression that the credit of locating and unearthing 'the *triclinium* of what must have been an important Roman Villa' was due entirely to himself.

At intervals during the next five-and-twenty years more antiquarians in broadcloth and, often, in top-hats came to inspect the Pavement; occasionally young gentlemen from Oxford or Cambridge too. Farmer Thomas Reid gave them all a bluff welcome and the offer of a tankard of home-brewed. But he charged nothing for a sight of they liddle old bits of flooring; he didn't reckon that he'd have cared to have pictures like them to walk about on. There was occasionally talk by the top-hatted of what further discoveries the spade might yield, since it was clear, by the size of the room exposed, that the dwelling of which it formed part must have been of considerable size; but nothing came of these speculations. It was Farmer John Reid, the next in succession, who, beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century to lose money and to sell out-lying portions of his land, and having, to his annoyance, to rethatch the roof of the shelter, bethought him of making a charge for viewing what it covered—an innovation, however, which did little to ease his situation.

Farmer John's ill-luck was handed down in the eighteen-

sixties, with his debts, to his son Simon, a bad farmer, a bad manager in general and seldom out of the hands of moneylenders. After years of shiftless struggle, rendered harder by the fact that he was early crippled with rheumatism, the final crash came with bankruptcy, and the passing out of Reid hands of all the wide acres of tilth and shaw and pasture, and even of the generously planned old farmhouse with its weatherboarding and its beautiful tawny roof. With his sister Lydia, who had kept house for him since his wife's death, the childless Simon retired, a broken man, to that one of his cottages nearest to the Pavement. For Lydia had insisted that he should keep back from the sale the field on which it stood, pointing out that since of late years there had been a decided increase in the number of visitors to the mosaics, the small annual sum derived from the entrance money would be a welcome addition to a narrow income.

'Aye, so 'twould be if we could keep it for ourselves,' her brother had agreed. 'But we'd have to pay away every penny of it, and likely more besides, in wages to a man to show the Pavement.'

'Nay, for I would show it myself,' urged Lydia. 'I've often thought I'd like to. I could soon learn up a piece to say about it, and say it, too, a deal better than old Skinner in Dad's time. Then there'd be no need to pay away anything.'

## II.

A middle-aged woman then—the year was 1886—Lydia Reid had now acted as custodian of the Chasely Pavement for nearly fifteen years. She had spoken the truth when she announced, at the time of the disaster, that she would like to undertake the task, for ever since she was a child



the thatched shelter and what it covered had held a fascination for her. Now, at seventy-four, liking had become a passion. With nothing to build on but the knowledge that the first Romans 'came over with Julius Cæsar' and eventually stayed a very long time, and with exceedingly little money to spare for the purpose, she had nevertheless bought or borrowed any book on which she could lay hands about Roman Britain, its inhabitants and the remains which were their sole memorial. Visitors to the Pavement, therefore, who had some acquaintance with similar relics (which the majority had not) were often surprised to find its guardian so intelligent and well informed. Was she not just a withered old woman out of a cottage, speaking with the local burr, and often pronouncing the classical names rather oddly? Yet she appeared quite fond of the Pavement as well as being proud of it.

Actually the word 'fond' was ludicrously inadequate. It was adoration which Lydia Reid felt for that pictured floor, whose bond-servant she had made herself. So long had she lived with its myriad mosaics that she knew by heart its every discoloration and unevenness of surface, and could have found the three or four damaged portions blind-fold. Its bluish greys, its browns, its ash colours, its reds could not in her eyes have been surpassed by the greatest of colourists; its intertwined borders were to her the perfection of symmetry. Above all, the figures which it enshrined, whether of beasts or immortals, were her living companions. The peacock picking at a vase, with green and purple in his tail, who would almost eat out of her hand, the twin fishes for ever circling round each other, the panther wreathed with vine leaves—these never died, were never sick or sorry. And in the south-western corner lived her 'darling.'

She was a young girl with flying draperies who held a cup in one hand, and was conjectured by experts to be Hebe (or 'Heeb,' as Lydia, having first met the attribution in print, pronounced the name until she learnt better). But for Lydia this airy figure was nothing so unreal as the hand-maid of the gods; she was a beautiful girl who had once lived in the Roman Villa, and whose beauty the pavement layers had perpetuated—the young daughter of the house, in fact, as Lydia herself had been at Chasely Farm more than fifty years ago, but an heiress and courted, as she had never been. Before long she had also persuaded herself, though with scanty justification, that she could trace in those regular and somewhat lifeless features a resemblance to her own, as they had met her in the looking-glass half a century before. And after the wonderful day when she discovered that her own name was Roman, 'Hebe' became 'Lydia' too.

Of late years Lydia had taken to holding conversations with her namesake when no one else was there, talking of lost youth, her own or 'Hebe's,' in time so distant from each other, but in place so near, of her own worries, of her lumbago, of Simon's trying ways. She always came away cheered by this commerce, for, as people said, it was good to have somebody young about one, and seventeen hundred years or so had added no visible age to the girl who lived in that enchanted world at Lydia's feet.

If the caretaker of the Chasely Pavement must needs harbour a delusion about any of its figures, it might well have been thought (since she was an old maid, and all old maids, it is a commonplace of popular psychology, must of necessity long for a lover or regret the children they have never had) that Lydia Reid would have chosen for her affection either the Ganymede at the north-eastern corner,

although he had lost an arm, or one of the small cupids of the charming group in the centre, chasing the butterflies which for ever eluded them. But it was not so. It was only over Lydia-Hebe that she spread a piece of matting, when she discovered the danger which her darling was running from the leak in the roof which it took her so long to induce Simon to have repaired. From that it was but a short step to keeping a protective covering over her always, and to unveiling her for visitors as the supreme sight of the Pavement. And when Lydia had to admit persons who in her estimation were mere trippers and who abounded in senseless laughter and farcical remarks about the figures, she would refuse to lift the matting from her namesake at all. Nor had any of these unworthy visitants ever dared to raise it for himself, save, on one Bank Holiday, a certain Alf, who, urged thereto by his guffawing compeers with a suggestion that it must conceal something improper which it would be fun to see, had turned it half back—but no more.

‘She fair scared me,’ he confessed afterwards outside. ‘Did you see her eyes, you chaps? Regular old witch she is, and no mistake. And nothing underneath to cover up, that I could see—just a girl holding out a cup!’

### III.

The two visitors whose summons Lydia had reluctantly answered this afternoon were duly awaiting her at the gate. Accustomed to ‘size up’ such persons quickly, she saw at once that they were gentlemen. One had a short beard and eyeglasses and appeared to be about fifty, while the other, clean-shaven, pleasant-faced and alert, might have been ten or fifteen years younger.

They were both of pleasant manners also. Each lifted

his hat as the old woman came through the gate, and the elder apologised for disturbing her. But when the younger asked with a smile whether, since it was so hot, she would like to hand over the key of the shelter and allow them to go there without her, all his courteous manner went for naught with the guardian of the Pavement—in fact it counted against him.

‘Certainly not,’ was her curt reply. ‘That’s never allowed. This way, please.’

Before Lydia had quite turned her back to precede them she received an impression that the younger man had made a slight grimace at his companion. Let them go alone, indeed, after that! She would keep a pretty close watch upon them. Yes, that strange feeling which had seized her when the bell rang just now . . . she would have done better not to answer it . . . However, here she was, and they would not easily get rid of her, nor would they find it easy to slip into their pockets any of the little odds and ends which had been dug up with the Pavement, although they were only kept upon a shelf, open to touch or theft.

Clutching the key, she went ahead along the field path, the sun beating down hotly on her black-clad shoulders. Behind her the hills lay drowsing in the heat like gigantic but amiable beasts, an occasional ruddy fleck on the settled green of the woods showing that autumn’s palette was preparing. And all around the corn-fields which Simon had lost spread like a golden sea.

‘My hat, what a position!’ Lydia heard the younger of the men behind her exclaim suddenly. ‘And what fertile land! The Romans certainly had a flair for a site! But in this case, Professor, I suppose I should say the Romano-Britons?’

‘Hardly, Mr. Usher. The consensus of opinion is that

the Chasely Pavement is actually of the first century, of the time of Vespasian or Titus. This early attribution is one reason why I have advised the—— Ah, through this gate, I see. Allow me to open it for you, Miss Reid.'

Half an hour later the flame of Lydia Reid's hostility and suspicion was burning much less fiercely, dimmed in fact almost to extinction by the appreciation which the two gentlemen showed of the Pavement, the reverent care with which they examined every detail, and the wide knowledge which the elder, especially, showed of the subject of Roman villas in general. Her own little store was quite sufficient to enable her to recognise this. Experts such as these might, after all, have been allowed the unprecedented privilege of the key. Nevertheless, Lydia was glad that she had refused it, for otherwise she would have lost the pleasure of listening to their discussions about the floor, and showing them that she too knew that the subsidence near the centre was partly due to a flue of the hypocaust having given way. The visitors' admiration of the figures, and in particular of 'Hebe-Lydia,' was indeed so satisfying that for a fleeting moment she found herself, for the first time, on the verge of communicating what she knew about her darling. But she stopped herself upon that verge.

Since they knew so much about the subject it did not surprise her when the gentlemen finally asked permission to go round the outside of the shelter with a view to reconstructing in their minds the position of the rest of the Villa, which, from the size of this triclinium, must, repeated the Professor, have been the property of someone of considerable importance. Lydia was quite aware of that theory and said so. (Had not her darling been an heiress ?) She was in no hurry, she added ; they could take their time looking round outside. And sitting in the sun on the rough bench

at the door she watched them, but not suspiciously now. It had amused other people before them to indulge in these speculations about the extent and lie of the Villa ; she did not mind. What might still sleep in Pavement Piece slept peacefully, as deep buried as this banqueting floor had been before excavation, and no one had the power to disturb that slumber.

But after a while she got up and went round the shelter. The couple seemed to be arguing about something ; the elder had a plan in his hand at which the younger was looking, and a round brass case containing, presumably, a tape-measure.

‘ But, Professor,’ the younger man was saying, ‘ if the cryptoporticus was *there*, as Morgan says (following Lysons, I believe), then surely——’

‘ Oh, conjectural merely, this plan, you know,’ interrupted the Professor. ‘ I may quite well be wrong. Only the spade can show us.’ Then, becoming aware of the custodian’s presence, he said, rather abruptly, ‘ But we are keeping Miss Reid too long,’ and began to fold up the plan, adding as he did so, ‘ Perhaps, however, she will allow us to have a final glance at the triclinium ? ’

Preceding her this time, they left the sunlight for the tempered day and mitigated damp of the shed, and stood there in silence. That, thought Lydia appreciatively, was how the Pavement *should* be taken leave of, in a condition of reverent awe. She fetched from the side the piece of matting which she had not yet replaced over the Hebe. And at that the bearded Professor spoke.

‘ You do well, Miss Reid,’ he said gravely, ‘ to keep that figure covered. In fact the whole pavement would be the better for more adequate protection, would it not ? ’

Lydia could hardly believe her ears. For, perfectly courte-

ous though the tone was, the words were unmistakably words of criticism, even of reproach.

‘I don’t know what you mean, sir,’ she said, stiffening. ‘My brother had the shed repaired again only this spring.’

‘After the rain and frosts of the winter had done a little more of their annual damage ! Isn’t that so ?’ asked the Professor, still quite gently. ‘And you know, Miss Reid, next winter they will gain entrance at fresh places—as here, for instance.’ He suddenly jabbed with his walking-stick at a decaying plank.

‘Yes, of course they will if you make holes in the shed !’ retorted the old woman with acid vigour. ‘And anyhow I don’t see, sir, that it’s any business of yours ! This is *our* land and *our* shed—my grandfather put it up—and *our*’ (she nearly said ‘my’) ‘Pavement.’

‘Quite, quite !’ interposed the younger man hastily. ‘I am sure, Miss Reid, that you fully appreciate the importance of what you have on your property. But Roman work of this early date, with tesserae so uncommon, demands very careful protection, don’t you think ?’

‘Well, it’s getting it !’ snapped Lydia. Her eyes were bright and hostile. ‘Where do you think these tesserae’ (the word was quite familiar) ‘would be to-day if it hadn’t been for my grandfather in the first place, and my brother and me now ? I’ve given my life for the last fifteen years to caring for the Pavement. If you gentlemen only came here to find fault you’d better have stopped away. And I’ll be obliged if you’ll leave now !’

‘Looking distinctly uncomfortable, the visitors simultaneously declared that to find fault was the last thing they wished to do, and that they considered it most laudable of private persons to have gone to the expense of protecting the remains, as the owners had done for three generations.

By the time this joint apologia was finished they were outside again, and Lydia, very grim about the mouth, was locking the door.

‘You know, Miss Reid,’ observed the younger man rather tentatively, ‘that there is probably a great deal more of the Villa still remaining.’

‘I daresay,’ returned the old woman. She pocketed the key and began to walk away. He was obliged to follow her.

‘The Professor and I would very much like to have a talk with Mr. Reid about it.’

‘Simon don’t take no interest in the Pavement,’ returned his sister over her shoulder.

‘Oh, come, Miss Reid,’ protested the visitor, ‘you are libelling him, surely ! At any rate the question of upkeep must interest him. We should really like to have a word with him. Would he be at home now ?’

At that Lydia stopped and turned round. Against the ocean of ripe ears around her the old black dress and bonnet looked rustier than ever.

‘Simon’s always at home. He’s an invalid. Don’t you know that, sir, as you’re so pat with our name ? But he don’t see strangers nowadays. Good afternoon.’

After that he had to let her go. The Professor came up, and together they stood watching the small retreating figure in silence. Before long they saw it stop abruptly, rummage in a pocket and fling something invisible on to the path. When, a moment or two later, they themselves came to the spot, the shillings which they had paid for admission were lying on the parched earth at their feet.

#### IV.

It was fortunate that Lydia’s sudden attack of appendicitis should have occurred, if occur it must, during the latter



half of October, for by that time of year there was hardly ever a single visitor to the Pavement. In her bed in the County Hospital to which, intensely against her will, she had been whisked away, she was able to congratulate herself upon that fact, and also upon the stratagem which, even if an odd sightseer or two should turn up, would effectually prevent them from viewing the floor in her absence. For rather than give control of the shed to that chit Molly, the niece who was looking after Simon in her absence, she had brought away the key with her to hospital.

After all it was found unnecessary to operate, and Lydia recovered. More wisplike than ever in appearance, but spiritually undefeated, she returned to the cottage, dismissed the not unwilling Molly after twenty-four hours, resumed the reins, and on the first opportunity paid Hebe and Ganymede a visit.

‘I’ve brought you some flowers, my dear, to make up for being away so long,’ she murmured, looking fondly at her namesake ; and laid by the flying figure a bunch of slightly frost-bitten chrysanthemums from the garden. Never before had she done such a thing, and, sensible now of the pleasure which the act was giving her, she wondered why she had never thought of it before. Before she left she put the tribute on top of the matting which she had replaced—but, on actually quitting the shed, was so struck with its resemblance in that position to flowers upon a pall that she nearly went back and took it off again.

‘Been out to the Pavement, Lyddy ?’ enquired Simon, looking up from his eternal newspaper, as she re-entered the cottage. ‘’Twas a great pity you took away the key like that, because a Government gentleman came down here last week, and when he couldn’t get in——’

Lydia stood stock-still, her hand at her bonnet-strings.

‘A Government gentleman?’ she asked, an icy foreboding coursing through her. ‘What was he like?’

‘Very pleasant,’ answered her brother, misapprehending. ‘Very pleasant indeed, and said the Work Office, I think he called it—I’ve got the letter somewhere, with the name put properly—said this Office was going to take over the upkeep of the Pavement for us. The shed wants a deal of repairing, it seems—you should have told me about that!—and there ought to be some more digging done round about. Talked a lot, he did, about what a splendid big place the Villa must have been. And none of this will be any charge to us, and——’

He broke off with an exclamation; his sister was shaking him. ‘Simon,’ she almost screamed, ‘what have you been doing, what have you been doing? You’ve surely not sold Pavement Piece—you *can’t* have done such a thing!’

The crippled old man cried out in pain. ‘Take your hands off me, Lyddy—you’re hurting me cruel! No, of course I haven’t sold the Piece; it’s ours just as it was before, only——’

‘You’ve given leave to strangers, then, to come poking and digging there! So that’s what those two were up to that day, sneaking about and measuring!’ Hot tears of rage began to run down her wrinkles. ‘I *knew* I’d ha’ done better not to answer the bell that afternoon. The shed! God knows I’ve asked you often enough to have it properly gone over—so how *dare* you say I ought to have told you about it? You must take back the permission, d’you hear, Simon? Write at once and take it back!’

‘Listen here, Lydia,’ said her brother, half-cowed, half-angry, ‘I can’t take back my permission because I haven’t given none. The gentleman explained—Mr. Usher his name was. This here Office of Works (I mind now, that’s what

it's called), this Office has the right to come and look after old monuments and remains and such-like—and a good thing too, say I! I've had enough of your complaints about that old shed! Now they'll be responsible for it, and if they do some more digging in the Piece, as they think they will, there'll be all the more money coming in later. I see I must ha' put the letter that came on Tuesday up there on the chimney-piece; you read it and you'll see it says there was an Act passed last year——'

Lydia looked up, saw behind the clock on the high mantel-shelf a long envelope bearing the letters O.H.M.S. in lieu of a stamp, snatched it down, and tore out the contents.

Yes, there it was, the unbelievable.

'H.M. Office of Works, Nov. 7th, 1901.

'Dear Mr. Reid,

'As I explained to you on my recent visit, by the Act of 1900 this Department is empowered to take under its guardianship ancient monuments of any description, when such transfer of responsibility seems desirable, as in the case of the Roman pavement upon your land. I must reiterate that no interference with your rights as owner is contemplated, the field and pavement remaining as before——'

Lydia read no further. 'Behind my back,' she blazed, 'behind my back you could let them go and do this! You call yourself a man, and you couldn't stand up to them that come to interfere with your own property——'

Feebly rubbing the shoulder which she had gripped, Simon interrupted her. 'I don't know how you expect me to stand up to a Government department, Lyddy, even if I had the right use of my limbs! And look here'—he stopped rubbing, and there was a note of satisfaction in his voice—'what do you suppose had a deal to do with that

chap saying the Pavement would have to be taken over, as he called it: Why, your going off with the key like that, so that he couldn't get in, nor anybody else neither! It was that clinched the matter, my girl, and don't you forget it!

Shaking with wrath and despair, the little old woman stamped her foot. 'They shall never do it—never! I'll see to that! It's my pavement; they all know me, them that's in it, and I'll have no one, Government or no Government, interfering and disturbing them! A lot of noisy men to come digging round the shed . . . and somebody trying to take my place, I daresay, to show the floor! You write to your Office of Works and their spies and tell 'em it can't be "taken over," because I won't have it—and tell them where their letter's gone to, into the bargain!'

Torn across, it went sailing into the fire, and Lydia Reid, with thirty years fallen from her, rushed out of the room.

## V.

But the shock, and the ravaging emotions which it had brought, on top of her recent illness, restored those years and more. She was prostrate next morning, and a neighbour had to come in and look after the two of them. But in a couple of days the old woman rose from her bed, very white and quiet and unlike herself. Simon did not dare to refer to the subject of the Pavement, and was equally relieved and astonished when, after a while, she herself brought it up, admitting that she had behaved foolishly, and that its guardianship by the Office of Works would be the best thing. Nevertheless, her plans were not only laid to circumvent the Office but were already being put into practice.

Every afternoon, a little before dusk, she slipped out to the shed carrying a portion of the previous day's newspaper

and a bit of rag or sacking. The coal-hammer was already there, for she did not want to be seen carrying it to and fro. The risk of some visitor demanding admission in the waning daylight, almost negligible as it was, she had to run. But the work of destruction was much more strenuous than she had anticipated. She had thought that she could actually hack or prise out the tesserae, although in her years of guardianship she had discovered how firmly they were laid. But even so she had underestimated their stability. A floor which had withstood more than a millennium of neglect was not likely to yield to a rather frail old woman armed merely with a coal-hammer. Lydia could more easily pound the half-inch cubes of mosaic into smaller fragments than she could uproot them from the hard cement in which they were embedded on top of a still more solid eight-inch layer of fine gravel, pounded brick and lime. So she just smashed to the best of her ability, beginning in a methodical way with the least well-preserved portions of the Pavement, and covering over her ravages, as they proceeded, with sacking and the *Sussex Chronicle*.

At that time of the day and year she could not remain too long in the shelter without arousing Simon's curiosity, yet gradually the tide of havoc and newspaper spread, as the peacock and the fishes, the Amorini and Ganymede were submerged. And at last the evening came when of all the glories of the Chasely Pavement only Hebe remained, tranquil and unsuspecting beneath her brown shroud and the browner chrysanthemums.

Panting a little, Lydia laid down the coal-hammer, uncovered her, and knelt for some time gazing, with a heart so torn that its pain was physical, and made her catch her breath. But She could not be left to survive alone . . . no, least of all could She be left ! And time was short

now. There had been a further letter to Simon from the Office of Works ; somebody was coming down on Monday to make preliminary arrangements for the transfer. He must find nothing then—no trace of that beloved form, so light and airy, that flying scarf, that upraised goblet. She would wish it thus ; for was not She one's other self ? And it must be done all at once ; She must not spend even a few hours half-killed, mutilated. The final ruin would not come till after midnight.

Again and again the old woman bent and kissed the cold mosaic of the cheek. ' Good-bye, good-bye, my darling ! You understand, don't you ? Good-bye, good-bye . . . ' With tears running so fast that she could scarcely see she took up the coal-hammer and struck the first blow at the sandalled feet. It was like striking at her own . . .

She was quite composed at supper. The worst was over now. Simon, blindest of men, and convinced by this time of her complete acquiescence with events, talked about Monday's envoy. ' I reckon, by the hours you've been spending out there, Lyddy, that you're getting it all tidy and shipshape for him ? '

' Surely,' answered his sister. ' 'Twill all be ready for him when he comes.'

It was about two in the morning when she crept out of the cottage carrying a gallon tin of paraffin and a flimsy oil lantern with most of its glass missing. The newspapers, sacks and some kindling wood were already in place ; they only required a good drenching and a light setting to them. And since Lydia Reid had no intention of including herself in the holocaust—for she meant to taste the bitter savour of her victory on Monday—she was going to throw the lighted lantern on to the central oil-soaked pile from the

vantage spot of the open doorway. Then, retreating outside, she could watch the whole shed go up in flames above the smashed and meaningless floor, with the burning thatch shooting feathery drifts of sparks into the night.

Far up in the profound peace of the heavens the constellations with their Roman names looked down upon the place which the Roman had once chosen for his delight, and upon the old woman who loved it trudging towards the accomplishment of a deed not altogether inconsonant with the Roman spirit.

‘WHEN MOONS ARE DEAD.’

*When moons are dead and winter's pallid breath  
Blows ever still more strong upon the rose,  
And every opening bud is closed in death  
And Autumn shudders to its last long close,  
Then summer gold turns brown with speckled rust  
And withered flowers sting with half-dry scent  
Which rises from their blossom ringed with dust,—  
The last poor witness of their blandishment.  
But half-remembered joys return to smile  
Their final greeting while the shadows dance,  
And I must watch them for a little while  
Before I leave their bitter dalliance :—  
When scented flowers and silver moon have fled  
My dreams, my love, and I were better dead.*

J. C. BAYLISS.

*ASIA'S STRANGEST EXODUS.*

BY JOHN HOCKIN.

ONCE in every eleven years Ceylon's mountain forests are the scene of events so strange that they come as a fitting climax to what must be one of the most curious of the unwritten chapters in natural history. In 1935 the eleven-year cycle came round again, provoking an upheaval unparalleled in the memory of those who have spent a lifetime studying jungle lore.

The cause of these happenings at eleven-year intervals is the flowering of the Nilloo, a shrub growing abundantly in the forests above 5,000 feet and only blooming once, just before it dies. Then, under Nature's plan to ensure the survival of its kind, it blooms so freely that thousands of acres of jungle become for a month one vast flower garden, in which the wild bees gather in countless swarms to tap the lavish supplies of pale, scented honey.

Bees are the first guests at the forest banquet. They arrive at the beginning of April, as the Nilloo bursts into blossom, travelling in swarms from all over the central plateau of Ceylon. What instinct draws them in such numbers to the mountain forests at exactly the right time is a mystery, but in March of every eleventh year anyone living within a fifty-mile radius of Nuwara Eliya, the centre of the Nilloo jungles, will notice the unusual number of swarms zooming overhead, all flying in the same direction. In the wake of the bees come the birds that prey on them—the little Bee-eaters so nimble of flight that they will snap up any heavily laden bee on the wing, and the



Honey-buzzards, robbers of the honeycombs the bees hang from the forest branches.

By the middle of April there will already be many of these combs stained yellow with honey. This is when the Honey-buzzards become marauders. Flapping up against a comb, they will tear off a chunk with their claws and sail swiftly away, an action that spells danger for any human spectator of the theft, for in a minute or two the bees will have transferred their wrath to the floor of the forest and he will have to run for his life.

In 1935 the bees came in unusual numbers, and that was the beginning of the amazing events that followed, for more bees to pollinate the Nilloo flowers meant more of their favourite berries and seeds for the pigeons, the jungle-fowl, the rats, the pigs and the deer, and more birds and beasts to prey upon them.

So, as soon as the honey season was passing, and the flowers had begun to seed, the great invasion started. The pigeons came in their thousands to glut themselves on the Nilloo berries and punctuate the jungle stillness with their whistling; the jungle-fowl scratched, and fought, grew fat and lost a little of their fear of guns; the pigs, visitors from the lowland forests perhaps a hundred miles away, grunted as they drove their snouts into the carpet of Nilloo seeds; while the rats, feeding greedily, multiplied until one judged they could not be counted in anything but millions.

Meanwhile, above the banquet table, the big Snake-eagles and the smaller Chickras circled, diving down when they were hungry to seize reptile or rat. At night the owls took up the challenge, finding rats so easy to kill that soon they have grown fastidious and are only tearing the rats open to devour liver, lungs and heart. While, padding through the forest glades, the leopards, last arrivals at the

jungle feast, find game so plentiful that they need only exert a little of their lightning cunning to secure more meat than they can eat.

The leopards follow in the wake of the other animals, only drawn to the Nilloo jungles by the instinct to keep close to their food supply and not subject, as the bees, the pigeons, the jungle-fowl and the pigs must be, to some mysterious urge to forsake their usual haunts for almost unknown country. Perhaps it is because this sixth sense is lacking that the leopards always get left behind with the rats to enact the climax of the jungle drama.

By the end of May, or early June, when the monsoon clouds are swirling round the highland forests, the Nilloo has dried and fallen, and the pigeons, pigs and jungle-fowl have all dispersed to lower elevations. Then strange things begin to happen, warnings of the tragedy to come. The deer, normally among the most retiring of creatures but rarely seen outside the jungle edge, begin to be found lying up on the tea estates in the Nuwara Eliya area. Here they are harassed by the coolies, eager for a venison curry, but even that does not drive them back, for they prefer the clumsy hunting of Man to the terrors of the forests when hungry leopards are on the prowl.

With the departure of the invading hordes, the leopards' food supply is cut short. Normally in the whole of this jungle area there may not be more than half a dozen leopards. In June, 1935, the Nuwara Eliya forests were said to be full of them. As long as the rats remained there was no need for them to starve; leopard droppings in this area for weeks were full of rats' fur, proving to what diet the animals had been reduced.

Then came the climax. The rats began to die in tens of thousands. On every road and path in the neighbourhood

their bodies lay, sometimes as many as one to every two or three yards. Cars, passing along the roads at night, killed hundreds crossing or lying in their path. 'The mail train cut up thousands on the metals every night; many more were found dead from natural causes on the track.

The mystery of these natural deaths was never solved. Starvation was certainly not the cause, for the rats were fat, so fat, in fact, that the Tamil coolies accounted for the deaths of the ones torn by owls by saying they had burst. It was suggested at the time that the rats' habit of lying on the rails, and roads, pointed to some internal inflammation, though no proof of this was found. But, in conjunction with the fact that many of the rats seemed to be almost blind, this led to the belief that a virulent epidemic had come to wipe them out in thousands.

The wholesale slaughter of the rats made the leopards' position desperate. Feathers were now found in their droppings, showing that they were hungrier than ever. That hunger increased until two of them were driven to acts of desperation almost unique in Ceylon jungle history.

One morning a herd of cattle was being driven across bare grass land just off the main road a few miles from Nuwara Eliya and within sight of a cluster of wayside houses. Along the track there was no cover but a solitary, stunted tree. As the leading cattle got abreast of this tree a big leopard sprang out of a drain and seized one of the cows, which it only released when the four cattle-keepers ran up shouting.

'For the Ceylon leopard to seize a cow from a herd in broad daylight within a hundred yards of human habitation was amazing proof of the straits of hunger to which it had been reduced.

Another leopard was even more reckless. A European

Assistant on a neighbouring tea estate was roused early one morning to hear that a leopard had just attacked a coolie in the field of tea below his bungalow. He ran out with his gun to the place indicated, and was walking through the tea when the animal sprang at him and had mauled him badly before it could be beaten off. It was later hunted down and shot.

This extraordinary example of savagery on the part of an animal so easily frightened by Man led people to talk of the menace of the leopard. For several weeks that menace did exist. But gradually it dawned upon those Nuwara Eliya leopards that there would be better hunting in their old haunts, or perhaps it was just gnawing hunger that drove them away. One by one they followed the other Nilloo visitors to the lowlands and the exodus was over—for another eleven years.

### LOVES.

*First love may yield a glamour  
And like a sunburst come,  
But last love wields the hammer  
That builds a house and home.*

*First love may come with singing  
To claim a jewelled throne,  
But last love enters bringing  
A blessing for its own.*

*First love may fashion phrases  
Entrancing for a day,  
But last love truly praises  
By keeping faith for aye.*

CLARENCE EDWIN FLYNN.

## *ACCORDING TO ETIQUETTE.*

BY MONA GARDNER.

WE had passed the shop many times on our way to Zozoji Temple. We would pick our way through the *mêlée* of ox-carts, rikishas and screaming motor-cars at the wide crossing of Igura and then turn up a narrow alley which twisted over the brow of a small hill. After the third turn we would come upon it, a small unpretentious shop : its glass panels blinking in conscious humility at the great carved gate of some prince's palace which stood opposite.

The hard-packed clay of the lane was always scrupulously swept here, and it was seldom that a footmark disturbed the faint pattern which the crescent scratches of a broom made in the damp earth. Sometimes a fragile boat of yellowed ivory rode at full sail in the window, or it might be a dwarfed knight of greenish bronze who lunged at you in a sort of bantam fury. But that was all . . . a single object only.

Late one misty afternoon we lagged up the hill looking back at the small dip below where the silver of tiled roofs blended with the silver of the sky and where a jagged pine was silhouetted in eerie black.

A soft ingratiating voice filled the silence behind us.

'The heavens are kind to-day, and make a picture for me before my door.'

We turned to see an incredibly small man standing before the open panels of the curio shop. He might have been mistaken for one of his own carved figures so delicate were his bird-like features, and so drained were they of vitality that his skin seemed to have that patina which comes to old ivory

when it has been handled often. His black hair clung to his head as though it had been painted there. He stood with a long-spouted watering-can in one hand gently sprinkling an azalea bush. His wrists, as he tipped the can back and forth, were the frail wrists of an undernourished child.

'Aren't you fortunate !' Alan murmured. 'Hiroshige himself could not have painted a more alluring picture.'

A quick smile lit the shopkeeper's eyes, and his face relaxed ever so slightly from its mould of studious politeness.

'You are right,' he agreed. The funny little intake of breath which he used as a prefix to each remark was like an added syllable. I stepped nearer the wanton azalea blossoms which were drenching the air with their heady scent.

'You like them ?' he questioned, and then, not waiting for my answer, he continued : 'These are old. As old as I am, for I have had them since I was a boy. Each year they bloom earlier than any azaleas in the neighbourhood.' He stooped to pluck a withered blossom from one cluster, and when he straightened up it was to look at the flowers as a fond father gazes at a performing son.

'Will you come in and rest a moment ?' the little man suggested, motioning towards the shadowy interior of the shop as though we were wayfarers on some long pilgrimage.

Outside the slanting time-stained timbers of the shop seemed to draw themselves in apologetically from the proud new walls on either side. Yet there was no feeling of this in the dimly lit interior. Its quiet dignity made it seem like the vestibule of a home.

Raised up some two feet from the stone flooring of the entrance was the matted platform of the room itself. The man spread cushions for us and in another moment he had a large brazier edged between us. Deftly he heaped glowing fragments of charcoal into a burning pyramid, and although

the penetrating chill of that damp afternoon could not actually be dispelled by these valiant little embers, still the illusion was satisfying. Imitating him we passed our hands in the air above the brazier like ritualists of some strange cult.

Quietly he sat beside us, and quietly he made answer to our several questions. Later, breaking a long silence, he bowed and padded to the back of the shop. When he returned it was to bring with him a curious pendent lamp. Cut from brass, its whorls and meshes were so delicate and so intricate as to give it the appearance of carved lace. He lighted a fat stump of candle and when it was burning to his satisfaction he hooked the lamp onto a heavy-linked chain hanging from the low ceiling.

It seemed an act of friendliness more than anything else, for the timid light pushed back none of the crouching shadows. Near me on a low table I could see an amber snuff-bottle. Its stopper of apple-green jade was like a drop of sea-water with the sun on it. Against the far wall were two gleaming blackwood chests studded with medallions which must have dimmed at least one pair of eyes before the tiny chisel scooped the last delicate curl. In an alcove a wall-scroll with a smoky sun gave a haunting semblance of light.

‘You care for Hiroshige?’ the shopkeeper asked some time later. ‘Then you will find pleasure in this.’ He reached back to pull out one of the small drawers which lined the face of a cabinet behind him. He laid the drawer in front of us. Carefully, with reverent fingers, he drew forth a small bundle of musty silk, and from its layers he unwound the closed sticks of a slender fan. Gently he opened it before us.

‘See, the great artist himself painted this. Is it not beautiful?’

It was. The pageantry of feudal days was there in lush greens and scarlets toned by the grey of age. And like the

perfect frame of a picture was this handle . . . delicately traced lacquer with fretted inlays of ivory.

‘It is nearly a hundred years old,’ he murmured, caressing it with the palm of his hand.

A movement at my side drew my eyes from the fan and I looked up to see an apple-cheeked old woman kneeling there offering me tea in a small deep bowl. As we sipped the acrid brew our glances strayed again from the fan to the room and to its owner. Quick to notice this, the shopman drew forth another drawer.

‘Perhaps it is ivory you like?’ he said ingratiatingly as he lifted wadded cotton from a drawer and spread before us a dozen trinkets. The size of watch charms they were—a lotus pod, a pot-bellied god, an inch-long parasol resting on microscopic clogs. We picked them up, turned them over and laid them down, one by one.

‘These are very old, I am sure,’ I said by way of tribute.

‘Ah yes, I must have them old. My customers are not tourists, they know,’ he said, sighing.

‘You regret their knowledge?’ Alan asked.

‘Perhaps . . . I do not know. There are times . . . when I see my family with half-filled rice bowls for the noon-day meal. Then I regret that I do not sell to tourists.’

‘Tourists?’ Alan said in a prompting tone.

‘Ah, with my friend . . . it is different. He has a shop near the hotel. Each day the foreigners blacken his doors, and his family grows fat. His children go to the best schools and need not work.’ For a moment the little man toyed nervously with an ivory rose. ‘But it has not always been so. Before he learned to age his ivory his children were thin and without warm *kimono* for the winter.’ He smiled bitterly at this.



Again Alan prompted him : ‘ Aging ivory ? I do not understand.’

‘ Ah, foreigners, they are such children ! They run from the boats in Yokohama to shops and say, “ Is it old ? If it is not old I do not want it. How much is it ? If it is too cheap it is not good ! ” ’

His acrid mimicry seemed to people the little shop with droves of tourists, all repeating his phrases like some anti-phonal chorus.

‘ So, my friend—who learned to carve ivory from his grandfather who had learned from his grandfather—did not sell his carvings because they were too white, too clean, too new. Then when his first-born died because they could not afford the milk which the foreign-style doctors said would turn to new blood in his veins, my friend learned to soak his new ivory in tobacco juice. Now he sells for the price of antiques.’

‘ But is he never bothered . . . ? ’

‘ What would you ? ’ interrupted the dealer impatiently and a little scornfully. ‘ Would you have his family go without ? Perhaps my friend feels he owes loyalty to his own family first . . . lastly to strangers ! ’ The little man flounced on his cushion and there was silence between us. A moment later he turned to us again with the irritation all gone from his face. ‘ Maybe you will honour me by glancing at my poor collection upstairs. Many of my treasures I keep up there.’

For a long moment we hesitated. We had not meant to look at curios this afternoon, but something about the little man held us, made us wait for his next words. It was as though he were one of the parchment-skinned sages on a dusty old screen come to life, and we two hypnotised disciples kneeling before him. The quiet cloistered air of the lane

seemed to prove that only this was true and to refute the possibility of a busy commercial world. Then, too, we noticed the mist outside had changed to a fine drizzle and almost automatically we stooped and removed our shoes.

The shopkeeper unhitched the lacework lamp from its chain, and holding it over his head he began to climb steep abrupt stairs. It was like climbing a ladder which the uneven light of the lamp fitted with fantastic rungs. At the top a panel pushed back to show three rooms opening one from the other. The air was heavy with camphor and sandalwood. But the light was too dim to define the shadows which seemed to people the room and hold us like uneasy prisoners.

‘If you will find excuses for me, I shall turn on the electricity,’ said the little man. ‘Myself, I do not like it. It is so bright, so relentless. It destroys imagination. But foreigners are used to it.’

Whereupon he pressed a switch in the second room and the harsh glare of unshaded lights penetrated each corner of the several rooms. The first thing I saw against the wall before me was a great heavy-lidded Buddha as high as the ceiling who sat on a throne of gilded lotus leaves. Somehow the serene majesty of that emotionless face seemed to cast a benediction over the room, and the belongings of the curio dealer.

Low tables and high chests stood everywhere, and yet nothing seemed to be cramped. Only the art of many peoples and the fantasy of infinite generations could have produced such a mixture of the bizarre and the beautiful. And only a cunning hand could have matched them in such a seemingly artless manner so that one acted as a foil for the other.

On a low blackwood table immediately before me the soft blues of old Ming blended with the dead red of aged lacquer.

Sprays of cherry blossoms on a gold-cloth screen dripped pink petals on a writhing dragon of bronze. I moved along inch by inch—now mesmerised by a leering god carved from satinwood, now floating in the twilight depths of a Chinese bowl. The curio dealer padded along behind polishing this and dusting that, never saying a word, unless his way of sucking his breath could be construed as conversation.

Once in the course of our meanderings I passed Alan who was fingering some tobacco pouches of long-dead Samurai, and I stopped for a moment to glance at the curiously carved wooden boxes. As I stood there Alan suddenly laid down the pouch he was examining and stepped to a near-by table. His eyes were staring at a small screen on an upper shelf. The dealer—still at our elbows—spoke :

‘Ah, you like the little screen !’

‘Rather interesting,’ Alan said in a flat voice. I knew that the bargaining had begun.

The dealer reached his hand between us. ‘I will dust it,’ he said apologetically. Already the lacquer frame shone like satin, but now he wiped it meticulously with a handkerchief and then, tantalisingly, went over it again flicking each leaf.

‘Here I will place it so.’ He swept a collection of prints from a table and spread the screen across it. Next he darted for two low stools. These he placed for us, precisely, painstakingly, in front of the table, explaining meanwhile : ‘It is better that you sit to see it. Such a small screen as this you must never look down on from above. There !’ He stooped to look over our shoulders. ‘That foolish light is too bright ! Let me arrange it.’

He was off again. This time he made a swoop at the centre switch which cut off the lights in the room before us to leave a glow from overhead. Joining us again the dealer screwed

and bobbed his head from side to side as though to see and feel the beauty of this small screen himself for the first time.

It really was a lovely thing. Not more than a foot and a half high, its six panels were washed with dull silver—the colour of moonlight on still water. Three cranes, splashes of black and white with crimson beaks, flew towards pine-tops of old green. That was all, and it was perfect.

‘It is old, very old,’ said the dealer in curiously muffled tones.

‘Yet it looks so fresh, so new.’ Alan’s casual tones were irreverent, harsh even after those of the little man.

‘Ah, that is because it is by a master!’

‘Maybe so. But the paint . . . it is new, I feel sure,’ said Alan in his same flat tone.

‘I am sure you know about screens and about paint,’ the dealer said slowly, and his obsequious little bow robbed his words of the sting they seemed to hold: ‘but perhaps you have forgotten that the paint used by the old masters was of a different texture than that used nowadays. Perhaps I can show you.’

He was up and back again before he had finished speaking. In his hands he held a second small screen. With a confident flourish he opened it. ‘There, compare that! This is modern . . . made only four or five years ago. But you can see how the gold thread has blackened, and see here . . . some of the paint has scaled off!’

It was true. The screen he had brought for comparison was pitiful beside the silver one, but then it would have been pitiful beside almost any, for it was a poor specimen. With a slap he folded it up and his gesture was quite disdainful as he shoved it aside on a table. Slowly he turned back to the silver screen.

Alan said nothing, yet he did not take his eyes from the

screen. He turned it over and ran his finger-nail along the backing and then held it to the light. After another moment of painstaking scrutiny he set it back on the table, then slowly got to his feet, saying : ' Yes, it's nice enough, but I am not very interested in screens. I have quite a number.'

Whereupon he began to examine some old porcelain. At tiffin, just a few hours before, he had announced he wanted at least two more screens if he could only find unusual ones. But the shopkeeper couldn't have known this . . . Or could he ? He flicked his eyes in a knowing way and studied Alan a moment as though considering his next move in this game, then, with a gentle little smile and a deprecatory shrug, he said :

' But, of course, if you have screens you won't want any more. I quite understand.' He fell to polishing the lacquer frame once more. ' I will not have this long,' he said as though talking to himself. ' My regular customers have not seen it yet . . . some one of them will be interested in this bargain.'

' Oh, is it a bargain ?' Alan asked.

' So-o-o-o,'—the dealer drew in his breath as though he derived some subtle pleasure from the action. ' Actually the screen does not belong to me. It is for a friend that I sell it.'

' Oh, a friend,' said Alan, accepting the polite fiction as a matter of routine, ' and does he make it a bargain ?'

' My friend is not a dealer, you understand. This has been in his family many years. But just now he is a little short . . .'

' . . . a little short of ready money,' Alan supplied the familiar formula a little impatiently. But the dealer was unperturbed.

' Exactly,' he said. ' My friend finds that he does not have as much cash available as he wishes . . . so now he thinks to exchange this screen—which he values highly—for silver.'

Alan made no reply. But he turned abruptly from the screen to pick up a bronze urn fashioned like the hull of a ship.

‘That is an unusual incense burner you have there,’ the curio dealer remarked equably. ‘A traveller brought it to me from an island half a day’s distance from Formosa.’

‘Yes, I rather like it,’ Alan replied, and I could tell from the note of his voice that he was becoming annoyed by these elaborate preliminaries. ‘How much did you say your friend wants for the screen?’

‘Sa-a-a-a.’ Again there was the sibilant suck of breath. ‘I think . . . maybe . . . sa-a-a-a . . . should I tell my friend that you appreciate the art of our country he . . . maybe . . . would be softened . . . and to you he might sell for . . . maybe one hundred and eighty-five yen . . . I don’t know.’

‘Ah, is that so!’ But it was not a question as Alan said it, just a murmur of soft vowels. Then neither of them moved. Both stood staring at the screen. I grew uncomfortable at the silence.

‘It is to be regretted that your friend must part from his screen . . . especially if he needs silver . . . for I do not believe he will receive such a price,’ Alan said at last.

‘You think the price too high?’

‘I cannot believe he will receive such money.’

‘But you yourself, if you were to think of buying such a screen, what would you be willing to give?’ the dealer asked with a guileless air.

‘Ah, that is difficult to say . . . since I do not want a screen now, since I have plenty of them, it is difficult for me to think what I would pay. But . . . supposing I were to want it . . . I think I could not feel right if I paid more than one hundred yen.’

A cry like that of an animal in pain came from the dealer.

‘One hundred yen!’ he choked. ‘One hundred yen! Why, I should be ashamed to tell my friend of such a price!’

‘Perhaps your friend does not really wish to sell,’ Alan suggested softly. ‘Perhaps he makes the price high so that no one will really buy the screen from you.’

The dealer brushed this aside with a gesture. ‘But have you really examined the screen? Have you really thought that it is by a master who has signed it? Have you thought of the workmanship . . . the age . . .’ Once more he fell to polishing the lacquer, this time vigorously with vicious flicks of his cloth.

‘I have examined it well . . . it is truly beautiful . . . and I have told you what I would pay if I were thinking of buying such a curio,’ Alan said with finality.

With equal finality the dealer shrugged his shoulders and flipped the screen closed. Then with careful ostentatiousness he opened it again to place it on its rack on the table where it had stood previously. ‘It is well that we do not wish to do business,’ he said, smiling benignly at both of us, ‘for our two prices are strangers.’

We turned towards the stairs. The dealer stepped forward hastily.

‘Permit me to precede you . . . that I may light your way. Again I must ask that you pardon these crude steps which cause you such inconvenience.’

Down the stairs the little man bowed us, all the while holding the filigree lamp high above his head. As we sat upon the stoop in the vestibule putting on our shoes there was a thin rattle of the bamboo-thread curtains and the same pink-cheeked woman bowed herself to our sides again to offer us steaming tea. ‘Please drink it,’ she murmured solicitously, ‘it will warm the body so you will not feel the rain.’

Gratefully we sipped it. As we drained the last drops the dealer said : ' My friend who owns the screen is very sensitive. But if you think you might be interested in this curio, or if perhaps you would like some friend to have it, I will question my friend once more that I may get his very lowest price.'

' Yes, please do that,' Alan said. ' And some day when we are passing this way I shall drop into your shop again.'

We were at the door now. A small boy with bulging cheeks appeared from nowhere and opened the sliding panes for us. The shopkeeper and his woman had prostrated themselves on their mats, and amid a chorus of ' Honourably depart ' and ' Protection stay with you ' we passed out into the dark street where only the reflection from paper-shuttered windows showed us our way.

. . . . .

During the next few days Alan spoke of the screen several times, and there was a peculiar possessive tone to his voice as he described it to an acquaintance. But when this acquaintance asked : ' Where did you say this little shop is ? ' Alan's answer was, ' I don't suppose the street even has a name.' After that the subject didn't come up again.

However, it was nearly three weeks before we made our twilight walk towards Zozoji again. No one was about in front of the curio shop when we came abreast of it, and I noticed that the azaleas had been replaced by dwarfed peonies. Yet barely had we begun to slide back the glass doors before the moon-faced youngster we had seen before appeared. In the shadows of the shop itself we saw the dealer bowing low to us from his floor cushions.

' Ah, I am most honoured to see you again,' he said to us pleasantly. ' It has been unusually chilly this spring, hasn't it ? '



We agreed that it had.

‘But perhaps that is just as well,’ he continued in a serene manner as though we had come merely to discuss weather with him. ‘You know, we Japanese read from the plants . . . because they tell us so honestly. We have had much more snow this winter . . . much more than usual. That means that the bamboo will be a double green and when that is so, the summer is sure to be hot.’

We hoped this was true.

‘Yes, truly! The plants tell us all things. From them we come to know of the seasons, and from the seasons we learn of our crops . . . for the crops are life to us. If there is enough rice to feed the people and the mulberry is plentiful then we know our nation will be truly prosperous.’

We saw that we were friends come to call. There was nothing in this polite casual talk to betray business. It was interrupted only for a moment some time later when the youngster sidled into the room with the small screen folded under his arm. Surreptitiously almost, it was laid on the mat beside the curio dealer. And there it lay unnoticed, unopened, as he chatted on and on. At last, with a casual unhurried gesture, he indicated it.

‘You see I have not sold this memento . . . I knew that you wanted it. It has been put away until you would come again.’ His confidence was unruffled, unhesitating, and there was a certain sedateness in his manner which suggested consciousness of having granted a favour.

‘You have talked with your friend?’ Alan asked.

‘Ah, my friend is so sensitive. It is such a delicate thing to approach him about such a matter. You understand, I am sure. But I am also honour-bound to try and please you . . . so I brought myself to broach the subject. At first I could not stand the pain in my friend’s eyes.’ The dealer drooped

before us, woebegone and dismal, crushed by the emotion of this fancied encounter. 'He grieved so that one should bargain over his screen. Myself, I did what I could. I reasoned with him and explained that you were a foreigner, and so could not be expected to understand things as we do them.'

Alan's manner studiously maintained the fiction despite this last thrust. 'And what answer did your friend give?' he asked patiently.

'My friend, he is very sad. But since he must sell his screen and since you are filled with the want of it, he has said he will sell it for . . . one hundred and fifty yen.'

'One hundred and fifty yen?'

'Think of such a difference! You are very fortunate!'

'But have I not already said to you that if I were buying the screen I would not pay more than one hundred yen?'

'Yes, of course, but we were merely talking that day. This screen for one hundred yen? Why, even another dealer . . . were I to take this to the auction house . . . would pay me more than that!'

'Then it is to the dealers you must extend your favours. One hundred yen I am willing to give for the screen, but that is all!'

'Too bad, too bad!' murmured the shopkeeper. 'I am sorry to see you lose this treasure.' Tenderly he folded the leaves of the screen together, and one could almost imagine that there were tears in the little old man's eyes, so dejected was his attitude.

One particularly stormy night two weeks later we were reading in the living-room after dinner. The rain was tattooing against the wooden shutters with a staccato roar and over and above this was the clamour of the glass panels as

fitful gusts peevishly shook them. It was perhaps the middle of the evening when the sound of the *amah's* sandals slip-slapping along the bare wood of the corridor changed the pattern of noise about us. She heaped more wood on the fire and then told us in her childish treble there was a curio man in the kitchen who wished to show us something.

'He comes from near the Shoguns' Tombs, I think,' the girl added in explanation. From that we guessed our visitor to be the little man on the hill who had probably brought us news of the silver screen. After an unhurried interval he joined us, bowing, and smiling, and drawing in his breath noisily. Under his arm he carried a package.

'You do well to stay by your fire this evening,' he commented, 'for it is wicked weather outside.' With another bow he settled himself on a floor cushion at our feet.

He refused the cigarettes offered him and with half-distinct apologies drew forth a pencil-shaped pipe. From a pouch that some Samurai must have carried long ago he extracted strands of wiry tobacco and worked them into a pellet. Between puffs he made pleasant and intelligent comments about the wooden panels of the ceiling and the walls. Leisurely he smoked, and leisurely he talked, with never a mention or a motion towards the package on the floor beside him. Perhaps a half-hour passed as we learned a connoisseur's opinions about woods, their grains, their age and their polish.

Finally with a deprecatory gesture the man hastily tapped the charred pellet from the pipe bowl. With the first show of haste he tucked the pipe in his girdle and rose to his feet, announcing as he did so that he had already overstayed his time. He drew his package to him and as he talked he undid the knots in the cloth napkin which served as an outer wrapping. From a box which told its own tale of time the screen

was taken. A moment the dealer held it before us while the firelight told a story on the dull silver, then he moved to a far corner of the room.

‘If you will permit, I shall place it here.’ Not waiting for the permission his words had asked, the little man set to work on a high blackwood table. Candlesticks from a Korean farmhouse he unceremoniously laid aside. The books went too—everything save a carnelian medicine cup and a hand-high statuette of some ancient Chinese beauty.

Behind these he unfolded the screen to its full length. Instinctively—or perhaps after a half-hour’s study—he had selected the one place where the reflection from its silvered panels would light up a dark corner and where there were neither brocades nor ornaments to overshadow its simplicity. A moment only he paused, as though to note the effect upon us, then gathered up the cloth wrapping and went towards the door, saying :

‘It is well that you should try the screen in your home first to be sure that it belongs here. See, I shall leave it with you for a few weeks as a loan. Perhaps after that time you will not care for it as you do now. You may even tire of it.’

We laughed with him over his little joke, but the curio dealer’s laugh was the loudest, for it was the laugh of a successful business man. He knew he had won. After living three weeks with the screen, we would never part with it.

*Tokyo.*

## GENIUS LOCI.

BY PROFESSOR L. W. LYDE.

IT seems probable that the basal element in any *genius loci* is definitely geographical, and this in more than one sense of the word. From the historic standpoint the primary fact behind every event—the birth of a great poem or the death of a lava-sealed city—is location ; we are unlikely to understand and interpret it rightly unless we know where it occurred, and the ‘where’ is not a Euclidean point indicating merely position without magnitude. Geographically, the idea of location must include ideas of shape and size, surface features and atmospheric phenomena. To this ‘control’ Man must be exposed, and to it he must make ‘response,’ even if he is quite unconscious of his reaction, and though our knowledge is still far too scanty and too superficial for us to be able to explain the process. We only know that, where Nature’s question has been different, there Man’s answer has also been different.

But why so much ridicule on any theory of geographic ‘control’ and human ‘response’? Apparently, because Man’s conquest of Nature has provoked much premature self-congratulation. We may excuse the optimism engendered at a successful conference ; but we may probe the boast that ‘engineers are no longer bound by geographical chains.’ If so, why can the New York Central Railway run longer and heavier trains, in less time and at less cost, between New York and Chicago by the low and level Mohawk Valley than the Pennsylvania line can run by the

*shorter* route over the 2,000-foot scarp of the Appalachian plateau ?

If we transfer the problem from the sphere of physical relief and manual work to that of climate and intellectual work, we may ask a similarly testing question. If location means practically nothing, why has Man found it overpoweringly difficult to think with a view to *immediate* action except in a strictly temperate climate ? Of course, we must not interpret the word 'temperate' narrowly, still less as meaning only 'cool.' Some famous thinkers, including Mr. Edison, have found that they could work best at a temperature of about 63°–64° F. ; and that happens to be the *average* temperature in the Greece of Pindar and Pericles. So, the most important frontier of the Roman Empire in Europe ran for hundreds of miles practically along the course of the midwinter isotherm of 32° F. ; and in Naples 'frost is a word.'

Of course, we must neither underrate nor overrate the value of racial inheritance. An average temperature like that of an English summer may have favoured the mental development of the Mediterranean peoples in Attica and Boeotia ; but the Mediterranean type, the glory of the orange latitudes, had to be invigorated by the Nordic type, from the apple latitudes, before the world could reap the inspiring art and literature of Greece. The enduring political organisation of Rome had a similar story.

That 'English summer' comfort was no hardy nurse of heroes ; there was need of creative virility. Most of the Greek goddesses were of Mediterranean type, but nearly all the gods were of Nordic—or Alpine—type ; and so were all the Homeric heroes except the wily and short-legged (*Iliad*, iii, 210) Odysseus. Zeus may be pictured almost as a bluff, full-bearded Devon seaman of the Elizabethan Age ;

and the fair-haired, apple-loving Apollo was a pure Nordic.<sup>1</sup> By the time that he was comfortably domiciled in Greece as a Mediterranean 'native,' with silver bow and golden sword, he had become the most versatile and many-sided of the Greek deities ; but most of his attributes and activities remained Northern, and he was true to his apple. What an appropriate and appreciative patron he would have been of the *orange-pippin* and its growers !

But he was specially the God of Soothsay, and soothsay was closely linked with song, the Delphic oracles being chanted in metre. 'The golden lyre was shared by Apollo and the ebon-haired Muses,' who were evidently of Mediterranean type ; and 'Apollo sat midst the choir of Muses, in all their beauty, and led their songs, sweeping his lyre with a golden quill.' The words are Pindar's ; and he, as the sweetest of all Greek singers, was Apollo's special favourite. Indeed, the priest of Apollo in Delphi, as he closed the doors of the temple at sunset day by day through all the years when Greece was at the height of her glory, paused to proclaim :

*'Let the poet Pindar come in !'*

It is a delicate adventure for anyone except a poet to criticise poets ; and, even then, the critic must be a wholly self-less poet, with wide outlook and catholic sympathies. From one point of view the task is made a trifle easier, from another a trifle harder, if the poets criticised are of a bygone age and far-away lands. Then at least their work has stood the test of time, and it can be seen detached against a background which is unfamiliar.

The presence of a geographer, then, amongst the un-

<sup>1</sup> Of course, the word is not used here to camouflage a Slavo-Tartar hybridism, such as is typical of Prussia.

poetical and the unangelic who dare to rush in, may be pardoned if he confines himself to the sphere of his own special business—study of the environment of those whom he ventures to criticise, and whose environment is crystallised in the *genius loci*. His main advantage is that this environment may be regarded as stable. No doubt, ‘the everlasting hills’ are being everywhere ceaselessly crumbled, by rain and wind, heat and cold, into myriads of atoms that go to build up vast plains some hundreds or even thousands of miles away. But the mills of God grind very slowly. Apart from catastrophic changes, the great typical features remain; the crests and the coasts of Attica look to us very much as they looked to Pindar. Follow him eastward at sunset along the Sacred Way, and you will see the City of the Violet Crown as he saw her from afar!

Even if the features do sensibly change through the centuries, the forces that play—so variably—on them seem to be persistently stable. The bow is still set in the cloud; seed-time and harvest follow each other unceasingly across the stage. Man cannot be independent of all this, even if his response to it may easily be, and for most men is, unconscious or subconscious. The most sensitive minds, too, must always have responded to it most quickly and most deeply. Then why should poets of different race and different region, but with very similar environment, respond so differently? The particular poets referred to are Greek and Chinese, as represented by the Odes of Pindar and the Odes of Confucius, who was a contemporary of Pindar’s for nearly half a century.

The Asia of the early Chinese poets and the Europe of the early Greek poets are in the same latitudes, and both have markedly two-season climates. For nearly half the year in both lands, winds blow from the north, and then



for nearly all the other half from the south ; and in both the general northward or southward movements are modified for nearly half the year by a westerly element, and then for nearly all the other half by an easterly element. Both, too, are dusty lands in the lee of deserts, the Gobi and the Libyan, from which inexhaustible supplies of dust are carried—to China by a north-west wind over a frozen land, and to Greece by a south-west wind over a warm sea.

This difference is the key to the problem. Greece is maritime, and this south-west wind reaches it over the warm Mediterranean ; and the consequent rain makes winter the busy time for cultivation, and the dry season becomes the leisure season for plant and man. North China—and old China was only North China, ‘ Yellow-Dust ’ China, the basin of the Yellow River—is continental, and its rain is Monsoon rain that reaches it in summer ; and so summer is the busy time, and winter is the leisure season. These three obvious differences between the two lands have their parallel in three obvious differences between the poetic output of the two. The Chinese poems are very short, they are all and always in rhyme, and they are a chaos of apparent irrelevancies—three features wholly alien to the Greek poems and the Greek genius. A perfectly fair selection (25) of the best poems composed in the earliest epoch in China shows an *average* length of 14 lines ! A similar number from the second epoch shows one of 22 lines. In both epochs the ‘ best ’ lines contain only four syllables—a relief for which to be thankful in the case of a monosyllabic language ; for a long poem in long lines would have meant, say, two thousand consecutive monosyllables !

The abuse of ornament is, however, still more remarkable ; and nothing could differentiate more clearly between the Chinese genius and the Greek, especially if we take into

consideration the stark mediocrity of the Chinese in sculpture and architecture. For, though there may be several racial and regional factors at work, certainly one factor was the season of leisure. In Greece this is the hot, dry summer, which is very adverse to plant-growth and to the tasks of farmer and gardener. But the Nordic energy which had intruded into the higher Mediterranean culture, was too virile to allow the Greek to be idle. He did not need to work, for slaves did all that ; but he could play, and could give the world its best illustration of the truth that all outbursts of art on the large scale have been based directly on the combination of energy and leisure.

Obviously, the old games—running, wrestling, boxing, etc.—were really suited only to the apple latitudes, and more suited even there to winter than to summer ; but the conquerors were not going to change their games for those of the conquered, or to shift them to the busy time of the year. So the great Games were all held in summer, three out of four in July–August, when the mean daily temperature is over 80° F. even in the shade. For strenuous exertion under such conditions clothes were normally an impossible encumbrance, though some races were actually run *in armour* ! Indeed, this struck Pindar as so remarkable that he has given us a little picture of such a race, won by a man at whom a queen and her ladies had been jeering as ‘ old ’ because his hair was touched with grey :

*Mailed in bronze trappings he had run,  
And went to take the prize thus won,  
With—for the queen—a gage :  
‘ Here for my speed stand I. My heart and hands  
Can rival that. But oft a few grey strands  
Paint even young men older than their age.’*

But clothing was an exception ; and so the whole people,

flocking to the Games, came to have a profound knowledge of the human body at its best. False standards of art could not be imposed on such a people, least of all in sculpture ; and the sculpture dominated the architecture. Stone was the natural medium for calm, clear-cut, intellectual ideas, even in a young people ; and the Greeks were a young people, young in spirit and young as the inhabitants of Greece. They had the simplicity and the naturalism of children ; they were as imitative and as free from self-consciousness ; and, again, they were attracted to sculpture as the most imitative and the most objective form of Art, as well as the one for which they were best equipped with practical knowledge.

But, if the statue—even of a god or a goddess—was supremely natural and simple, what of the temple where it was to stand ? It must never be more than a home—an appropriate home—for the deity imprisoned in the stone ; and so it could never be allowed to decorate itself excessively or irrelevantly, or in any way become in-subordinate to the statue, however simple that might be. And what this meant to Greece may be suggested by one of the ‘stone-cutters,’ who embodied the very spirit of Greek sculpture, though not clever with his chisel—the whimsical, quiet-voiced seeker of truth known to us as Socrates. Simple, natural, balanced, very human, he never preached or proselytised, never mumbled mysteries or shouted slogans.

But what is true of Greek sculpture is true of Greek literature. Wisdom, truth and beauty had eternal values for Pindar as well as for Socrates, even if the greatest of the three was to Socrates truth, but to Pindar beauty. For both, too, what was not simple and natural and balanced was almost not human. It seems to be very significant, then, when Chinese poetry is described by three of the

four vital epithets—‘ simple, natural, human ’—without any reference to the fourth—‘ balanced,’ i.e. with that sense of proportion and propriety which abhors excess and irrelevance. And, surely, irrelevance or redundancy cannot be pardoned simply because the superfluous matter may be allusive or metaphorical. For instance, a typical 3,000-years-old lyric of 18 lines, in three rhyming stanzas, devotes six of the lines to a repetition of ‘ grandly to south the thunder rolls,’ and this is followed each time by a line referring to the mountain over which the storm is breaking—‘ Behind yon mountain’s crest,’—‘ Along yon mountain’s side,’—‘ Around yon mountain’s foot.’ But the poem is *not* about a storm, but about the singer’s love for her absent husband :

*My great lord is not here, alack !*

*May he come back ! May he come back !*

It seems as if, in the stagnation of the tiny holdings to which they were glued, these gardeners found their *genius loci* in the one moving and changing factor in their environment, so that there is a basis of truth in the hasty generalisation that ‘ these Chinese lyrics are just a series of inconsequent comments on the weather.’ They certainly throw direct light on the local and the regional scene—suggestions as to latitude and longitude, the position of the ocean, the character of the winds. ‘ The south wind is soft and kind,’ but brings that thunder. There is no west wind, though the poets do not know why. ‘ The east wind is the gentle one, with clouded skies and gifts of rain ’ ; for the Pacific lies to the east, and the temperatures of land and sea are so nearly the same in summer that the wet winds cannot be strong. From the desert ‘ the north wind brings a cloud of dust,’ and ‘ the shroud of dust outveils the day ’ ; ‘ when the wind blows shrill,’ it may even bring a drift of snow.

As one reads lyric after lyric, all cumbered up with these trivialities and repetitions, one is apt to feel rather bored and contemptuous ; but there is a racial and historic background to it all that is far from being contemptible. For the proto-Chinese were steppe nomads, who wandered eastward for centuries, guided only by the 'signs' of earth and sky—to subside at last into sedentary gardening on tiny plots of the fertile yellow-dust ; and their descendants to-day, if they have a weaker political sense than any other great people in the world, have a stronger geographical sense than any other. If you ask your way from a Chinese peasant, his directions will be geographical—e.g. 'turn to the east !' not 'to the right' ; and everywhere place-names are geographical and significant. Even a gate built by an emperor will not bear his name, but be 'Eastern' or 'Western,' perhaps with a suggestion of sunrise or sunset. The first half of an eight-lines lyric, twenty-seven centuries old, runs :

*Where grow the willows by the Eastern Gate,  
Shading a leafy bower where we might lie,  
She said that she at eve for me would wait ;  
Yet here I see bright sunrise in the sky.*

The writer was quite aware that an eastern gate at sunset is the darkest of all the gates.

If we turn from these tiny poems of the age-old East to the far finer and larger-scale work of the West in its youth, even the feeblest of the Greek lyrists is in a class above that of the best of the Chinese ; and yet the greatest of them, Pindar, has provoked some curious criticisms merely because he was too great an artist to be guilty of 'Chinese' irrelevancies. Some of the criticisms are quite general : 'These Greek poets do not make any precise observations and distinctions' ; 'these lyrists are, normally, incurious

about both natural and scientific phenomena.' Some particularise : 'Pindar was no Ruskin'; 'he never rhapsodises about the *chiaroscuro* of natural scenery.' The answer to the general criticism is that it is equally true of English poets; except for a little—quite a little—of Wordsworth, Tennyson stands almost alone for consistently subtle and accurate observation. And, if the particular criticism implies that Pindar was indifferent to the wonderful colours and lights of his homeland, that is as much mistaken as the assertion—from the same critic—that the City of the Violet Crown in no way owed her title to the evening veil of violet haze over the ring of Attic hills that guards her.

Why should Pindar have rhapsodised about natural scenery? He was writing about sport, not scenery; and that at least accounts for his being 'no Ruskin'—incapable of denouncing the crews in a boat-race as 'rude disturbers of the river's peace.' As he was singing about sport, rapid movement was essential to his artistic purpose; and to digress and linger over the stationary and the inanimate, however beautiful, would have been crudely inartistic. Of course, there are people, as W. P. Ker once said, 'who think that "Sir Patrick Spens" should have begun with a description of Dunfermline'—with the full story, no doubt, of Malcolm Canmore's Abbey and the remains of Bruce and even with an intelligent anticipation of the Forth Bridge! There are even a few 'scholars' of this type; but they are only dictionary and grammar men, with immense knowledge of dead forms and no appreciation of living words.

But the absence of lumber does not imply that Pindar was unconscious of, or indifferent to, all the natural beauty around him; and we have convincing evidence that he

was not. His interest in Man was intense, and it may be true that no one can be equally interested in human history and in natural history ; but it is certain that no one could have sung so sunnily and with such glow if he had not been alive with sunshine and inspired by the colours of land and sea and sky. Indeed, Pindar was very nearly poetry personified ; for his ideas were always linked by emotion, and his descriptions are in complete harmony with his emotions. But his emotions were obviously reacting to some *immediate* experience ; and what immediate experience could have been constantly recurring except a mood of the atmosphere, especially the pageantry of sunset in a dusty land beside the sea ?

The critics do not realise that Greece is almost unique amongst the lands of the world. Its canopy of wind-borne dust causes such a scattering of light that it has the most translucent atmosphere of which we know ; it has great variety of relief in tiny area, reflected in the amount and the value of cloud and shadow ; it is a land of summer drought, and yet—curiously enough—its natural colours are *cool*, especially as seen against the ‘white’ of the limestone background. This summer drought means long hours of bright sunshine—*yellow* sunshine, for we want to notice the colour. Red stands for heat—solar, sensual, spiritual ; blue stands for cold—polar, bodily, intellectual ; yellow is luminous, and it is embodied in the most enduring and the brightest form in gold. About this, Pindar and Confucius agreed ; and Pindar, alone among the famous poets of the world, uses the word *golden* as ‘a constant epithet.’ One expects him to use it of weapons and ornaments, of thrones and palaces, even of fruit and flowers ; and one is not surprised at his using it of light and health and victory, of clouds and hill-crests, even of glens and the eagles that

haunt the glens. But he uses it of snow and even of lads<sup>1</sup> and lasses.

It is easy to quote him to show how wide his sympathies really were with Nature in almost all her aspects. He must himself 'have stood and marvelled at the trees, and been seized with honey-sweet yearning for them.' He lamented that 'with a keen axe one should trim a mighty oak of every limb, thus marring beauty that enthralls.' He watched — 'the amber tresses of the mist veiling the shadowed ridge' — and Evadne's baby lying asleep 'beside her silver pitcher and her crimson belt (on a bank where) his little body was suffused with flame from gold and purple pansies' — and mist condensing on an eagle, with his wings 'stream-lined' for a swoop on a leveret, as he ruffled up the brown feathers on his neck in a quiver of excitement. He could not think of 'Etna, with snowy brow nursing a wintry frost the long year through,' without thinking also how 'from her recesses spring virgin founts of flame that none can face.'

But there is no need to quote at length. These critics do not seem to be very familiar with Pindar, nor do they seem to realise how much more significant and more valuable the general spirit is than any isolated gesture, the right attitude of mind than any mere body of knowledge. Pindar is acknowledged as the greatest master of metaphor that the world has seen, and no one could be that unless his spirit was so deeply in tune with the many-sidedness of both Man and Nature that he could see automatically the basal resemblances which his metaphors imply and suggest.

<sup>1</sup> Housman's *Golden Lads* (so much abused lately by so-called critics, one of whom is reckless and ignorant enough to write that the words 'could not go straight into *any* Classical Language' !) is simply a direct translation of Pindar, e.g. Olympiad, xiii. 8.



## IN BURPHAM CHURCH.

*Chiming the hours towards Eternity  
The old church clock moves hand in hand with Time.  
High from the ivied tower one hears its call  
Across the rolling Downs of chalk and lime.*

*And, sitting in the ancient dusk awhile  
Of that so peaceful refuge of the soul,  
The weighted ticking of Time's metronome  
Adds to the solemn meaning of the Goal.*

*Long, long ago it beat into my heart  
The gentle rhythm of a summer day,  
The droning hum of bees, the clover's scent,  
The sound of Sussex men among the hay.*

*Now, as I listen to its steady tick  
My eyes are filled with alien, unshed tears,  
And twixt my vision and the altar rails  
There passes by a caravan of years.*

*Second by second, in that hallowed place,  
Beneath the Gothic arches and old beams,  
In silence but with never-flinching hands  
The Past unrolls a tapestry of dreams.*

*The hour strikes, unwavering and true,  
Dispelling thoughts upon life's aftermath.  
I rise and, facing to the Orient,  
Step out once more on the time-honoured Path.*

HESPER LE GALLIENNE.

## IN CASE OF SHIPWRECK.

BY M. SINTON LEITCH.

‘I’m sorry, my dear, that you think my behaviour scandalous.’ October spoke in a bantering tone, but I could detect an underlying sarcasm.

‘I shouldn’t call it exactly scandalous,’ Eloise said, ‘but I hate to have you talked about.’ She lay luxuriously at ease in a steamer chair, her body turned slightly—and I had no doubt, deliberately—so that every curve showed to the best possible advantage. She had grace and beauty of a sort, though it was as garnished, as ornate, as the frosting on a wedding cake. I felt sure she was depending on it to bring Fenton Loomis to her feet.

He lay in a reclining-chair beside her, his long mobile fingers playing idly with the overhanging branch of a magnolia tree. A few of us who were October Strange’s friends had gathered at her summons on the lawn of Magnolia House and were enjoying the cool shade after the intense heat of a summer day.

‘What have you done now, October?’ asked Claire Eastman. Her tones were genuinely anxious. She loved her friend, I knew, but, dainty, conventional little creature that Claire was, she was incapable of understanding the other girl’s independence and self-sufficiency.

Eloise blew a ring of smoke from her cigarette towards Loomis. He threw a kiss to her lazily by way of acknowledgment. ‘Noble Fenton!’ she cried. ‘He returns a kiss for a blow.’ Then she turned towards Claire. ‘I will tell you what October did,’ she said. ‘She went to

live with Fenton without benefit of clergy.' She laughed, but with more malice than mirth, it seemed to me.

A slow flush coloured Loomis's lean, mobile face. He drew himself upright in his chair. 'Look here, Eloise, there's such a thing as carrying a joke a bit too far,' he said to her.

'I know what it was October did,' I put in hastily, wishing to pour oil on troubled waters. 'Mrs. Strange herself told me.' I refrained from adding that she had expressed strong disapproval of her daughter's conduct. 'Little Gloria was very ill a week or two ago,' I said to Claire. 'Her governess was away on a vacation. And October went over to stay at Fent's to nurse the child. Shocking, wasn't it?' I asked ironically.

'But wasn't there——' Claire paused in embarrassment. 'I was wondering whether a trained nurse——'

'Gloria is very nervous and high-strung; it was after the nurse left that October took charge.' I faltered over the explanation, angry and ashamed that self-forgetfulness such as October had shown need be explained at all.

The butler had arrived with a tray of sandwiches, cakes and tea and our hostess had risen and was busying herself at the tea-table which was now invitingly spread before us. She dismissed the man with a nod and exclaimed in evident irritation, 'Why need we talk about what I did? It happens that I love Gloria and I wanted to take care of her. How silly to suppose I would hold back just for a useless convention!'

Loomis had relaxed after his outburst and now, instead of rising to assist October, he lay indolently watching her as she dropped little cubes of ice into the glasses. He had none of the gallantry that would have been expected in a person of his breeding. In another man his indifference

to the social graces would have seemed inexcusable. In him one forgave it for the sake of the genuine distinction of his personality—a distinction which, oddly enough, seemed to gain rather than lose through his indifference to outward forms. His charm too was the greater for his indolence which might at any moment change into dynamic action.

I knew little of his antecedents, or of his history prior to his coming some ten years before to Teignton. Nor did I know anything about his marriage save that he was a widower with the one little girl, Gloria, when he first arrived in Virginia. His means, which appeared to be ample, had been accumulated entirely in the shipping business during the decade that had just passed. I had heard that he had spent many years in the West Indies, but I had never succeeded in drawing him into talking of his life there. I felt some curiosity about his shying off from the subject of that experience, but after all, he was still in his early forties and it was natural enough that the present instant should be all-absorbing.

After a few moments of preoccupation with eating and drinking, Eloise remarked, as she played with a slice of lemon in her glass: 'Conventions may be a bore, but what should we do without them? We should all be savages.'

I was annoyed with her for reverting to the subject. She was discreet enough when she cared to be, but she was jealous of October, that was evident; and she could not resist thrusting at her again.

At this moment Shadwell Burton, the town's youngest physician, came towards us across the lawn. 'What's that about convention?' he asked, after greetings had been exchanged.

I knew that Eloise had gained an ally. From his dapper

little moustache down to his highly polished shoes Shadwell was the perfect example of conformity to the regular and expected.

Hoping to avoid recurrence to the personal note, I hastened to reply : ' We have been discussing the question of convention in general——' But Eloise was determined that neither she nor anyone else should be tactful.

' We've been discussing the question of convention in particular,' she corrected me. Smiling at Burton she drew a gold cigarette-case from her reticule and held it out to him. He took a cigarette and returned her smile as he lighted it. ' You see,' she said, ' October has been——' But it was now her turn to be interrupted.

Fenton Loomis lifted slowly from his chaise-longue his slim, muscular figure. ' It's good of you, Eloise, to be so much concerned for a friend's reputation,' he said, ' but in this case it won't be necessary for you to feel any responsibility much longer.' Fenton's tones were ironic : I saw that he was really angry at last. He held out a hand to October. ' Come, let's tell them. I think Eloise needs to know.'

October allowed him to draw her to her feet. Evidently she was not as emancipated as she would have us believe, for she blushed like a schoolgirl and looked at Fenton with eyes radiant with worship. ' I reckon they know now without our telling,' she said.

I was scarcely heart-free myself where she was concerned. And certainly Burton was not. Nor indeed were any of the Teignton bachelors who knew October well. She radiated charm as a dynamo radiates electricity. And—more important than all else to the male mind—she was always of a pleasant temper. Yet there must have been a vein of stubbornness in her. For example, there was her insistence upon changing her name. She had been christened

May, but when she grew to young girlhood she announced that she wished to be known as October. Her father and mother, to whom the proposed change was equivalent to blasphemy, protested first with cajolery and then with punishments, but in vain. The child insisted that she loved the autumn more than the spring. 'May is too upsetting,' she said; 'I want a quiet name.' And October she became to everyone except her parents. She was an independent little creature, thinking her own thoughts, dreaming her own dreams. The new name suited her well. There was the auburn of the darker leaves of autumn, maples in her hair, and her large, expressive eyes were the colour of pecan kernels when the nuts are ready to fall.

A fine couple, this Fenton Loomis and October Strange. Anyone, seeing them together as they stood now hand in hand, must have been struck with the fitness of their mating. Her direct, forceful, yet feminine mind, her vigorous young body, matched his keen intelligence and superb physique.

Not even Burton and I could look upon those two happy people with aught but approving eyes. And indeed, as we confessed to each other later, neither of us had dreamed of aspiring to marry October. We were in love with her a bit whimsically, quite humbly, as a page may be in love with a queen. So, it was with genuine goodwill that we offered our congratulations.

At a nod of permission from our hostess I refilled our glasses and we stood in a circle and lifted them high. I saw Eloise's hand shake a little as she carried her tumbler to her lips, and I thought I detected a tinge of malice in her voice when she said, 'Well now, October, you will be able to kick over the traces more vigorously than ever.'

October replied very sweetly, considering the provocation to do otherwise. 'Eloise, I never intend to do shocking

things, really. I think most conventions are silly, that's all, and I cannot——'

A harsh street cry broke across her quiet tones. 'Extry ! Extry ! All about the sinking of the *Alcestis*. Two hundred lives lost !'

I walked across the lawn to the iron fence that surrounded the Stranges' property and passed a coin through the paling. A paper was thrust into my hand. My friends crowded about me with exclamations of distress, as they saw the black head-lines on the page. 'One hundred per cent more men saved than women. Suggests the disaster of *La Bourgogne*.'

They took their seats again at my bidding and to the little circle in the shade of the glistening magnolia I read the account of the shipwreck.

The story was one of the age-old tragedies of the sea against whose anger we seem to be for ever impotent. A few lifeboats only had been launched, for a heavy gale was blowing. In these one hundred or more passengers had survived and had been picked up by rescue vessels. The others had perished.

'Isn't it abominable that such a large proportion of those saved were men ?' said Eloise. She reached out a hand for the paper : I gave it to her and with delicate much-manicured fingers she turned the pages. 'Listen, girls,'—she addressed herself to Claire and October—'those lovely linen suits at Welch's have been cut to half-price.'

I think neither of them heard her. They had both been sitting very still while I read the account of the catastrophe. On Claire's small face crowned with very black curly hair, and in her Irish eyes, was a look of honest distress. 'At least,' she said, 'the children seem to have been saved—most of them. But as for the women—well, the figures

alone are damning enough. The men must have been awful cowards.'

October crushed her cigarette out and let it fall into the grass beside her chair. 'Don't you think, Claire,' she said, 'that it is asking a good deal of a man that he should give up his place in a lifeboat to a complete stranger just because she happens to be a woman?'

Loomis was clutching the arms of his chaise-longue. I saw his knuckles whiten. He was gazing at October with great intentness.

'But, my dear,' Claire remonstrated, 'it's the custom from time immemorial! You do away with chivalry altogether when you do away with that!'

The Stranges' great Saint Bernard, Chillon, came lumbering across the lawn and lay down at October's feet. Leaning over she laid a hand on the animal's massive head. 'Chivalry was all right for Sir Walter Raleigh,' she said impatiently, 'but to-day——' She dismissed the chivalrous ideal with a contemptuous shrug.

Eloise, who had been hidden behind the newspaper, laid it on the grass beside her. 'I admit, my dear,' she said to October, laughing, 'that gallantry can go too far. I always thought it mean of Queen Elizabeth to step on Sir Walter's velvet cloak.'

'Now come, Eloise! You know you would have walked over it yourself without a moment's hesitation,' I retorted, more in earnest than in fun. I felt annoyed at Eloise's persistent trifling.

'Perhaps I would,' she replied good-naturedly enough, 'but then, Queen Bess was not sufficiently good-looking to get by with it.'

There was laughter at this sally, but not on the part of our hostess or of Fenton.



‘After all, Claire,’ October pursued her argument, ‘it is very pretty for a man to offer his chair to a lady in a drawing-room, but you can hardly maintain that he should step aside with a polite bow when a dreadful death is the price of his politeness.’

‘The assumption that a man should sacrifice his life for a woman’—it was young Dr. Burton who took up the argument here—‘is founded on something other than chivalry.’

‘Oh, I know the reason is actually biological,’ October admitted frankly. ‘We are the mothers of the race. But don’t you think this motherhood argument has been rather overdone? There are no mothers unless there are fathers too. I don’t admit the soundness of the biological explanation.’

‘Well, one thing we can all unite upon,’ I put in. I disagreed entirely with October’s viewpoint, but to argue about it was difficult. Her position was logical enough, but the question was not one of logic but of feeling. ‘Both reason and instinct cry, “Children first!” There can be no discussion about that.’

Chillon got clumsily to his feet and laid his great head on my knee and I gave him what remained of a currant bun.

‘Of course,’ October agreed. ‘That goes quite without saying. But as for the women—well, at least let them leave it to men to criticise men when in case of fire or flood they make an effort to save themselves! Why shouldn’t they? I get tired of my sex’s complacency! Down, Chillon!’ she said in an aside to the dog. He obeyed, and lying again at her feet regarded her with worshipful bloodshot eyes.

Fenton had meanwhile been sitting in the same rigid attitude that he had assumed a few moments before. His eyes had left October’s face and were fixed on the far hori-

zon with a tense, inscrutable regard. Suddenly he leaned towards her and spoke with an odd distinctness. 'Do you mean that in the matter even of the saving of life, there should be no regard paid to sex at all?—that a man and a woman should have an absolutely equal chance?'

I felt that the moment was somehow freighted with importance, but I think October was unaware of Fenton's intensity, so absorbed was she in her own indignation.

'I mean exactly that,' she replied slowly. 'Even where life itself is in question reason should govern, not instinct. Surely we have advanced in civilisation to a point where we may relegate unreasoned action to the beasts.'

Fenton looked at October during a long moment with steady searching eyes. Then suddenly he got to his feet and said brusquely, 'I must go now.' He held out to her a lean distinguished-looking hand. 'I will see you to-night,' he added, and with a nod to the rest of us, he strode off across the lawn.

. . . . .

It was not long before I learned the reason for Fenton's odd behaviour. Our little lawn party had broken up at his departure without further reference being made, even by the irrepressible Eloise, to the subject of the shipwreck. On the following night I was alone in my bachelor quarters—a flat in Old Ardmore Street overlooking the jetty—when the brass knocker sounded an impatient staccato on my door, and Loomis entered without awaiting a reply to his knock. 'I want to talk to you.' He spoke abruptly, omitting preliminaries of greeting.

I drew up two chairs before the hearth. Though the month was June the air was unseasonably cool, and I put a match to the ready-laid logs. Fenton stood looking at the flames as they greedily licked the paper, then leaped at

the wood. His face in the firelight was white and his eyes haggard. I bade him sit and he obeyed. I arranged a lamp that stood on a table near his chair so that the light should not shine on his face and I set a box of cigars at his hand.

‘Thanks,’ he said, ‘but I like this better.’ He pulled a pipe from his pocket, filled it from a leather pouch bearing his initials in silver (a gift from October, was my mental comment), and proceeded to draw in the smoke in quick nervous draughts.

I smoked my pipe and waited. During a matter of five minutes or more no word was spoken. This was, on the face of it, nothing unusual. Loomis never talked for the sake of talking but, to those who understood him, often gave the rare gift of friendly silence. This silence, however, was charged with speech. I knew that some deep emotion held him tongue-tied. At last he spoke, but only to betray a feeling no stronger than annoyance.

‘Insufferable, Eloise is really,’ he said sententiously.

‘I wonder why October tolerates her,’ I responded.

‘Oh, their mothers are close friends,’ Fenton answered. ‘She won’t look at anything seriously,’ he added irritably. ‘Now yesterday——’ He paused and, rising, moved about the room. He picked up a book here, a magazine there, then set them down again with restless inconsequence. At last his reticence broke.

‘I came to talk over the shipwreck, Garry—at least, not that one, but another. I want your opinion as to what I ought to do.’ He was pacing up and down. ‘You see—after what October said——’ He stood looking down at me. ‘I was in a wreck ten years ago. You remember the *Altamont* of the Arbuthnot-Edgars line?’ I nodded. I recalled the disaster clearly. Fenton took his seat again and

sat leaning forward staring into the fire. 'Alice—that was my wife's name—and I were on that ship, Garry,' he said. 'She had cancer. I was bringing her back to the States to die. The end was very near.' Fenton was speaking so low I could hardly hear him. 'She knew and she wanted to be at home in Baltimore at the last.' His long fingers were twisting together and untwisting. His voice was shaking.

I rose and laid a hand on his shoulder. 'Wait a minute, old man,' I said. 'Let's have a drink.' I brought whiskey and water and poured out two generous portions of old rye. Fenton drank his at a draught. He then took up his disjointed story as though there had been no interruption.

'I had gone into fruit-growing in Cuba, I made a lot of money and then in a bad year I lost it all. We had nothing left. I was even in debt.' The voice was still low, and as toneless as though an automaton were speaking. 'That is the way things stood when we sailed. And there was Gloria. Two or three years old she was then.'

He paused. The flames on the hearth had died down. I thrust a Cape Cod lighter under the logs and the fire leaped at the kerosene like a mad thing.

'Then came the wreck.' Fenton's voice went on. 'It haunts me. It has haunted me ever since. The worst of it is that nobody knew—or knows—except Alice and me. If you could only see it as I have seen it—over and over.' Fenton leaned towards me. His face was close to mine. His voice that had been lifeless was harsh. He spoke as though the words were wrenched from him. 'I took my wife's place in the lifeboat, Garry.' Fenton's eyes were desperate in the firelight. I stared at him horror-stricken, saying nothing. 'Garry! Do you hear me?' he asked sharply. 'I took Alice's place in the last lifeboat!'

‘Well,’ was the only word my stiff lips would utter.

‘She was dying. I told you that.’ His voice was pleading with me for understanding. ‘We were taking our seats in the boat as it was about to be lowered. The captain said there was room for one more only. Suddenly my wife shook herself free from the sailor who tried to detain her. She insisted on my going in her stead.’

Through the bitter agony of his voice I could hear the rending asunder of the rotten plates, the greedy sucking of the water, the screams, the deathly hush of realisation that the ship was about to take her final plunge—and then the madness of panic—the dark vessel on those tossing, terrible waters, her lights stabbing the brutal night—flickering—dying. Like some wounded monster, rolling, twisting, lurching, she awaited her end.

Men were trying to quiet the hysterical women, children were babbling excitedly, only dimly aware of their danger. Sailors in frantic haste were trying to launch their overcrowded craft. A rope breaks : there are fresh screams as a boat that has swung out to dangle over the black water spills its human freight. A hand clutches at the rail green-pale, then slips to oblivion. Now the last boat is ready to be lowered. The captain, stoical, counts the heads. ‘One too many ! Someone must wait. Hurry there !’

Then that fateful parley between husband and wife, for whoever stays will die. Fenton struggles towards the steamer’s deck. ‘No, no ! Not you ! You can’t go !’ His wife pushes past him. ‘Can’t you see that I’m the one !’ Tears streak the tired face. ‘I’m the one. Someone must look out for Gloria. I haven’t long.’ The terrible logic of it : ‘I haven’t long.’

All this I gathered from Fenton’s scattered phrases. ‘God !’ he cried suddenly in a strangled voice, ‘if I had had

an instant's desire to save my life at the cost of my wife's ; if I had so much as thought of myself at that moment, do you suppose I would have asked such a woman as October Strange to marry me ?' He gave a quick ironic laugh of denial.

I held out my hand to Fenton, as I could not have done to a lesser man, and he gripped it in a vice. 'Forget it all, Fent,' I said. 'You have nothing to be ashamed of, nothing even to regret. Nobody who knows you could doubt that.'

'Thank you, Garry,' he said softly. He emptied his pipe into the fire, put it in his pocket and rose. 'Then it's all right,' he said, an immense relief ringing in his voice. 'And now I can tell October.'

. . . . .

The following afternoon as I walked home from my office my mind was full of Fenton Loomis and the strange dilemma in which fate had placed him. In the name of reason, of common sense, how could he be condemned for what he had done ? The more I thought of his conduct the more I felt sure that he had acted with a clearer intelligence and a more far-seeing wisdom, yes, even with a greater readiness for self-sacrifice, than the majority of men were capable of. In the discussion on the Stranges' lawn October had been right and I had been wrong. It was something atavistic in my blood that had caused me to place reason above instinct. Because the animal in us still predominates many would misjudge such a deed as Fenton's. But no one need know of it save October and myself. It was strange, I thought, that Fenton should have hesitated to unburden himself to her, that he should have put his story to the test by telling it first to me. And this, too, after the scorn she had expressed for a conventional estimate of conduct.

Doubtless the inhibitions resulting from his experience at the wreck had cut so deep into his soul that he could not easily rid himself of them.

As I walked slowly, deep in meditation, her words came back to me. 'Even in a matter of life and death instinct should be governed by reason.' She had spoken with the intensity of passionate conviction. Yes, she was right, and I was thankful that a man who had been trapped and tortured as Loomis had been trapped and tortured, had her to turn to, her clear intelligence and understanding to rely upon.

I had reached the street corner where Magnolia House stood, but might have passed it without noticing my whereabouts, so absorbed I was in my thoughts, had not Chillon bounded out of the iron gate, barking a joyous offer of hospitality. 'Down, old fellow !' I ordered him, for I had to lean against the palings to withstand the ardour of his invitation. He stood then watching me with anxiety in his bloodshot, heavy-lidded eyes. It occurred to me that Fenton had probably gone to October with his story upon leaving me the previous night and that it might be well to go in and assure her, if only by my presence, of my own admiration for Fenton's conduct. Chillon's great tail stirred slightly while he doubted what direction I would take, then waved vigorously when I turned towards the gate. With an air of vast dignity he led the way to the garden. Sure that he knew what he was about, I followed him.

In an enclosure of tall box there was a glossy space of lawn. A table and a few chairs painted a cheerful apple green gave the place the aspect of a pleasant open-air room. In one corner in an apple tree a mocking-bird was doing a turn at vaudeville. In another corner on the velvet grass lay a white Persian cat, apparently asleep, yet exuding a

curious feline awareness of the bird. At the table sat Fenton and October side by side, their backs towards the neatly clipped pillars of box which formed the entrance to the close.

Chillon, not deigning to glance at the cat, walked past her and lay down. I stood for a moment delighting in the homely beauty of the scene. Then suddenly I perceived that October was sitting, her head bowed on her arms which lay on the table before her. I must have made a startled movement, for, as I was about to withdraw, Fenton turned and saw me. He got to his feet and came towards me. 'Oh, Garry, I'm glad you have come,' he said, taking my hand and drawing me towards the table. His fingers were cold. His face was working. 'Perhaps you can explain to October—perhaps you can make her understand——' He broke off, pressing his lips tight together to stop their trembling. October raised her head and sat looking at me with dull, lifeless eyes.

'Garry,'—Fenton spoke again—'she tells me I was reasonable—she tells me I was right—but she won't marry me, Garry. She says she can never marry me.' Fenton's voice broke and he sank into a chair and put his hand to his head in a pitiful baffled gesture.

'October,' I said, 'Fent has told me the whole story, and what he did was not only reasonable and right, it was generous, it was self-sacrificing—it was——' But October stopped me with a motion of the hand.

'It's no use, Garry,' she said tonelessly. 'I can't help myself.' Her tears were falling. She tried to say something more, but she could not. She rose and, bending over Fenton, she touched his forehead lightly with her lips and she was gone.

*Virginia.*



## BY THE WAY.

At the beginning of a New Year many make new resolutions : the new leaves that are turned over almost equal in number the pages of an American Sunday newspaper—and have about as long a life. Some start diaries, but diaries—as a judge dryly remarked when one, forming an important part of the evidence in a case before him, was mislaid—are notoriously hard to keep. One new resolution that might well be made is to answer letters promptly : it is true that many left unanswered for weeks finally need no answer, ‘procrastination is its own reward,’ as a Mrs. Malaprop observed : but in the majority of cases it is not merely much more polite—and politeness, when all is said and done, has a distinct commercial value—but much less wasteful of time. An undergraduate once called on a distinguished don to read him his weekly essay : he found him on his knees on the floor, which was entirely covered with miscellaneous papers. ‘Go away, go away!’ exclaimed the don irritably ; ‘I can’t attend to you, I have to find and answer a letter from the Master.’

\*       \*       \*

It may well be that mankind in general should at any rate exercise the virtue of consistency and say boldly that the only resolution they are going to make is the only one they intend to keep, namely, not to make any—even as my brother and I, in very impecunious adolescent days, used early in December to swear off presents to each other. Yet the doubt arises, is consistency a virtue ? Few critics think so : most authors, I suppose, have had the enlightening experience of being censured at one time or another in newspapers that

at other times exalt them—and for the same work. Public men—of the sort that led Adam Smith to speak of ‘that insidious and crafty animal, vulgarly called a statesman or politician’—have been known to wake up one morning with minds refreshed, if with memories impaired, and zealously advocate that which previously they had denounced. On the other hand, some have remained in their sins. I remember once an ardent Scottish Liberal of the old school saying to me that what he particularly admired about Campbell-Bannerman was that he had never altered his opinions in any respect from the day he first entered Parliament up to his Premiership. I innocently wondered aloud whether that was really praiseworthy and brought down quite a volume of invective on my head from the ardent supporter. But I am still, years after, impenitent: is it really a virtue never to alter one’s opinions, no matter what alteration in the times or facts may have occurred?

\* \* \*

The following is extracted from the monthly bulletin of the Organising Committee of the XIIth Olympiad, Tokyo:

‘As the year 1940, the year in which the Olympic Games will be held, will coincide with the 2,600th anniversary of the founding of the Japanese Empire, the exaltation of national spirit and the international comity through the Olympic Games are admirably harmonised, while World Peace and the elevation of national health are equally stressed.’

A race of wits the Japanese, evidently: much applauded, in particular, by Chinese competitors.

\* \* \*

The Royal Calpé Hunt, we learn, has now applied to General Franco for permission to hunt again, as formerly, on the Spanish mainland, and the permission has been granted. ‘Does not this,’ asked a humorist of a diplomat,

‘practically amount to recognition?’ The wish to hunt the fox in the midst of a war-ridden country must strike a foreigner as peculiar—but, after all, in this case the pack will have as ancestors hounds that hunted in the Peninsula in the days of Wellington. It is a pleasant bit of continuity, however peculiarly English.

★       ★       ★

Maria’s famous description of the three kinds of greatness is as true of families as it is of individuals. The family of Haldane unquestionably pass into the second category : few families in any century achieve anything approaching the eminence attained by many of its members. Two books lie before me in proof : the first, the first volume of Sir Frederick Maurice’s biography of one of the most misunderstood men of our time, entitled simply *Haldane, 1856–1915* (Faber, 18s. n.) : the other, Miss Elizabeth Haldane’s autobiography, *From One Generation to Another* (Maclochse, 12s. 6d. n.). This last has, as was indeed inevitable, both interest and attraction : Miss Haldane was long and closely associated with her brilliant brothers ; she has in the course of the years she reviews met almost every person of distinction in the country and she remembers the meetings with the exactitude of a diarist and she has herself played a conspicuous part in the public life and works of her times. I found the two chapters describing the first two decades of her life the most interesting of all, with their shrewd comments upon the vast changes which have since taken place, and I could have wished that the reminiscences were brought down to to-day ; but, as Miss Haldane is still happily with us and, if one may use the expression of a lady, ‘going strong,’ she may rectify that omission in a later volume. Sir Frederick Maurice, at any rate, intends to complete his biography which ends at present with the driving out of office of Lord

Haldane by as uninstructed and bitter a caucus as has wielded power in this country. Public opinion has long been acquainted with the facts : Sir Frederick has indeed little difficulty in establishing up to the hilt the truth of the sentence on his last page : Lord Haldane's ' dismissal from office was far more than a personal injustice, it was a national tragedy.' As may be expected, by far the greater portion of this first volume deals with Lord Haldane as the creator of the British Army : the publishers put it well when they write ' his greatest work was done at the War Office—or, if that be disputed, the greatest work ever done at the War Office was done by him.' Haig knew that and generously testified to it—and no one had better authority for such testimony. Sir Frederick shows, however, how much more than only a Minister for War, great as he was in that rôle, Lord Haldane was : but he does not give the other sides in any detail ; he was an eminent philosopher, a most distinguished educationist and a very able Lord Chancellor, and after 1915 these enduring interests came more and more into play. It will be exceedingly interesting to see how Sir Frederick accomplishes his second volume. In the first, apart from the expert and detailed description of Lord Haldane's work for the Army, two of the major interests are, first the emphasis laid upon the generous and far-sighted work and support of King Edward VII, and, secondly, the judicial account of the vigorous attempt of both Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Winston Churchill to reduce Britain's powers of defence in the critical years around 1912, an attempt which, had it succeeded, would hardly have qualified them for their later work in the War. Unquestionably a biography of outstanding and lasting importance.

\* \* \*

Everything that falls from the lips of the Lord Chief

Justice in public is naturally deserving of attention, and particularly so when the occupant of that important office is, as at present, possessed in abundance both of scholarship and wit. In consequence, there will be many who will find pleasure and profit in Lord Hewart's *Not Without Prejudice* (Hutchinson, 10s. 6d. n.), provided only that they are not disappointed at finding, after they have acquired the volume, that its description as 'a volume of essays' needs considerable modification. Essays there are, all recent and dated—though some of these appear to have been written for special occasions; but the bulk of the volume is made up not of essays but of papers read and speeches delivered: excellent as both the matter and manner of these are, it is inevitable that, reprinted without revision, there is much that is of the moment only in them. It is all very well for an after-dinner speaker to apologise for 'too hasty impromptus': but if they are published in volume form more than two years afterwards such words cease to have relevance—at all events, can form no part of anything entitled an essay. Still, when that is said, there are few men living who could make out of their occasional speeches a volume of such erudition and variety.

★            ★            ★

I commented last month upon the excellence as photographers of the traveller-authors of to-day, instancing recent books by Freya Stark, H. G. Quaritch Wales, Patrick Balfour, and Blair Niles: to this list must now be added Hugo A. Bernatzik, whose *Lapland* (Constable, 10s. 6d. n.) is not only a well-written account of a little known land and its interesting inhabitants but a remarkably well-illustrated one: it contains ninety beautiful photographs and is a noteworthy piece of production at the price, fully worthy to be set beside Dr. Bernatzik's two previous volumes *Sudsee* and

*Gari-Gari*, of the South Seas and the African Wilderness respectively.

★       ★       ★

Reasons of space compel me to group together three books of reminiscences as different one from another as life itself. There is, first, C. R. Nevinson's happily named *Paint and Prejudice* (Methuen, 12s. 6d. n.), the incisive record of a witty, rebellious, and indomitable artist: it is full of good things, conscious and unconscious. Here are four selected at random: 'I have always been intensely interested in other men's work, with no great opinion of my own . . . everyone has a skeleton in his cupboard. The Englishman hangs his on the wall. . . . I was giving a dinner at my studio to some of the most distinguished men in London, all leaders in their own spheres. . . . Personally, I feel that rows between artists do no good to art.' It all makes capital and interesting reading, and it is concluded by 32 fine reproductions of pictures by Mr. Nevinson. Sir Laurence Guillemard's life, described by him in *Trivial Fond Records* (Methuen, 10s. 6d. n.), has also not lacked incident, but of a different species; the events, first of a prominent Civil Servant and later of a Governor of the Straits Settlements, are told with brevity and many a good story: the tales of 'the light from heaven' in 1909 upon a very serious dilemma of the Board of Customs and Excise and of the seizure of German ships in 1914 are particularly good. And, thirdly, there is Mrs. William O'Brien's simple, and yet interesting, remembrances of her husband, of Tim Healy and of many another doughty fighter and friend, in *My Irish Friends* (Burns, Oates & Washburne, 7s. 6d.), which will give pleasure to many who knew them and the Ireland for which they fought.

★       ★       ★

Mr. J. R. Clynes has been commendably prompt in following up the first volume of his *Memoirs*, to which I devoted

some pages in the November issue, by his second (Hutchinson, 12s. 6d. n.), completing the record of his life, his work, and his opinions from 1924 to 1937. It is in many respects a better volume than the first : at any rate it is not so noticeably full of errors and it is undeniably a very interesting, if at times a strangely bewildering, human document. Few books can readily be recalled in which the author either in the midst of or at the end of many pages advancing a carefully considered argument inserts a sentence or a paragraph which is in direct contradiction to that argument—and this Mr. Clynes does not once but continually. For example : together with strong denunciation of the Unionist Government of 1925-6 for not giving in to the miners, Mr. Clynes uses extremely harsh words about Mr. A. J. Cook, their secretary, and about their intransigent attitude and also this paragraph : ‘ A national strike, if complete, would inflict starvation first and most on the poorest of the population. Riot or disorder could not feed them, and any appeal to force would inevitably be answered by superior force. How could such an action benefit the working classes ? ’ Again, after three long chapters on the 1931 crisis, the basic facts of which are very lightly skirted over, chapters of diatribe against MacDonald and those who acted with him (except against Snowden, who is only called ‘ foolish ’—because he saw the error of his ways later), Mr. Clynes begins his next chapter with these words of truly astonishing admission : ‘ As soon as the National Government had settled into power, and the immediate peril of a world financial crisis had been averted.’ And, thirdly, after denouncing rearmament and Baldwin and all his works, Mr. Clynes ends his account of the Italo-Abyssinian campaign, ‘ Nothing effective was done to prevent this outrage against humanity.’ Mr. Clynes continually states that Labour stands for peace : one may fairly ask him what does this comment mean if it is not a

complaint that we did not go to war : Much the most interesting chapters of this volume deal with Mr. Clynes's view of the day-to-day routine work of the Home Office—though here also it is, we gather, only Labour who ever did any good. The most attractive passages, and they are scattered all through the volume, are Mr. Clynes's generous and unstinted testimonies to the humanity, the conscientiousness, and the sense of public duty of King George V. We are left at the end with a feeling that we have read the life history of a hard-working, but sorely perplexed, man, one who knows in his heart of hearts that all virtue, both of intention and of execution, does not rest with the party to the service of which he has devoted his life, but never feels able freely to say so.

★            ★            ★

There are two main categories of writers of historical romances—those who have imagination but little historical sense, and those who have both. Miss D. K. Broster, as readers of her former novels know and as her story in another part of this issue proves, belongs to the second category. In her new romance, *Child Royal* (Heinemann, 7s. 6d. n.), she has been bold enough to place the much-used Mary, Queen of Scots, on her canvas, but clever enough not only to avoid putting her in the centre but also to choose the least written-of part of that tragic and perpetually attractive life, namely her childhood in France, the betrothed of the Dauphin. But it is not '*la reinette*' who holds the interest—nor indeed any of the characters, with none of whom does Miss Broster really bring the reader into vivid contact : all remain curiously at a little distance as though seen through a veil. The interest lies in the action and the setting—and there will be many who, without being moved as by a living drama, will yet read eagerly to the end—till Ninian is safe.

G.



## THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

## DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 171.

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answers, containing the coupon from page iv, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach the Editor by 29th January.

'No voice ; but O, the silence sank  
Like ——— on my ———.'

1. 'And seek relief in woe ;  
And while I understand and feel  
How ——— to them I owe,'
2. 'No longer could I doubt him true—  
All other men may ——— deceit ;  
He always said my eyes were blue'
3. 'For there the judges all are just,  
And ——— must  
Be his whom she held dear,'
4. 'Some mute ———ious Milton here may rest,'
5. 'The thick black cloud was ———, and still  
The moon was at its side ;'

Answer to Acrostic 169, November number : 'In the first *sweet sleep* of night' (Shelley : 'The Indian Serenade'). 1. SlipS (Thomas Hood : 'The Bridge of Sighs'). 2. WelL (E. B. Browning : 'The Deserted Garden'). 3. EnditE (William Dunbar : 'Lament for the Makers'). 4. EncensE (Dunbar : 'On the Nativity of Christ'). 5. TriP (Shakespeare : 'Sweet-and-Twenty').

The first correct answers opened were sent by Mrs. Walker, Masongill House, Ingleton, Yorks, and Mrs. Carré, Brant Cottage, Osmington Mills, Weymouth, who are invited to choose books, as mentioned above. N.B.—*Sources need not be given.*

THE  
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

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FEBRUARY 1938.

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CARLYLEAN COURTSHIP.

BY E. THORNTON COOK.

CHAPTER VI.

*JANE PLAYS SHUTTLECOCK.*

BEREFT of Jane, Thomas Carlyle finished his translation of Legendre's *Geometry* and received his fifty pounds.

Emboldened by the vastness of the sum he moved to quieter lodgings, from the windows of which, over trees, hedges and the intervening Firth of Forth, he could see the low hills of Fife, and if he wrestled long hours with the stubborn German tongue he also walked, bathed and ran, trying to lay the demon that rent his tormented body.

He was working on a review of *Faust* with feverish energy, looking forward to the day when he could send it to Jane Welsh in all the glory of print. A wonderful tragedy it seemed to him as he pored over the pages, doubting whether even Shakespeare, with all his genius, had had sadness enough in his nature to enable him to delineate the thoughts of an overwrought man with his mind in chaos when all the secrets of nature were bared before him, as had done Goethe. Ah, these Germans ! They had muscle in their frames ! He wished Goethe were his fellow-countryman ; he wished, ah, how he wished, that he could claim as a friend this man who offered living proof that it was possible to reject outworn dogmas without sinking into materialism.

Turning a page he read :

*'Fear not that I will break the covenant ;  
The only impulse now that sways my powers,  
My sole desire in life, is what I've promised !*

*Let's fling ourselves into the streams of Time,  
Into the tumbling waves of accident.  
Let pain and pleasure, loathing and enjoyment,  
Mingle and alternate as it may be ;  
Restlessness is man's best activity.'*

The door burst open and Carlyle started up in surprise :  
'Irving !'

'Away with your books, man ! For once you must play the part of listener. Your hat—your cloak if you have one. Come out ! Come out ! I've reached the turning-point in my career.'

Irving's excitement was infectious. A 'call' had come, and on the morrow he was to take the morning coach for England. What matter if his destination were an obscure chapel in Hatton Garden, one with so small a congregation that the guarantee bond required by the Church of Scotland might be a difficulty ? He would be free to deliver the message that was in him, free from the shadow of a man already great, free of the narrow ruling of a theology deeply suspicious of originality.

In the murky coffee-room of the Black Bull the friends read through Irving's testimonials and pondered how they would sound to English ears :

'I need not tell you what you will at once perceive,' ran that from a worthy Presbyterian who did not share the general opinion as to Irving's looks. 'The candidate is a large, raw-boned Scot whose appearance is rather uncouth, but I can tell you that his mind is as large as his body, and

that any impression produced by the young man's unprepossessing appearance will vanish as soon as he is known . . . His mind is gigantic . . . and he is sound in doctrine . . . He is honest, liberal, independent in his line, faultless in the discharge of his duties and exemplary in general deportment . . . I know no one who could fill the post more usefully and respectably.'

'That ought to help,' said Thomas Carlyle, looking at his friend with a smile.

'I appreciate it in all humbleness,' answered Edward Irving, then both laughed as Carlyle read the postscript aloud :

" "This is my true opinion and meant to be understood as written." "

The two talked till the small hours, for Irving made brave plans for the future. When he had found his footing in London, why should not Carlyle follow and make a bold bid for fortune? He was still embroidering the theme, when, in the chill dawn, it became necessary to climb to his place on the roof of the coach that would carry him south, and Carlyle returned to *Faust*, oppressed by the thought that the friend, who had been to him as an elder brother since the difficult days in Kirkcaldy, was being carried farther from him every hour.

Not till *Faust* appeared in the pages of the *New Edinburgh Review* was his gloom dispersed. Reading it through before posting a copy to Jane, he hoped she would not think it a paltry thing to have consumed two whole weeks of incessant labour; he must beg her not to look at it until she felt in a good mood, and to accept it, momentarily, in lieu of the four-and-twenty pages of a book for which she had asked.

Let her know that if *one* page of the book were written

nine-tenths of the difficulty would be over, explained the would-be author. Still, in due course it should be forthcoming ; this he promised. If he failed to affect anything in his day and generation which would justify Providence for having given him life, it would not be through weakness of will ; for the moment he was battling with a thousand difficulties. His ideas were in chaos, nor had he obtained mastery over his weapon, the pen, but he was persevering in the struggle. ' I will either escape from this obscure sojourn or perish,' vowed Carlyle, and told Jane that he was now facing life happily, since he felt he had a rallying-point—in two weeks, when he had finished some miserable encyclopædic compilations, he would come to Haddington : ' There are a million things to say and ask.'

Jane was startled. Mr. Carlyle's *Faust* pleased her, but the accompanying letter was certainly not one that could be shown to an anxious mother. Even to Jane herself it seemed a slightly ridiculous epistle. How could a stalwart Scot nearly six feet high talk about ' perishing ' if he failed in writing a novel, tragedy, or anything else : Such language was rather for a soldier rushing into battle. Re-reading the letter the girl felt yet more annoyed ; it savoured of mystery, which she hated, and was over-ardent in expression. ' He ought to have written to me as if I were a fellow-man interested in his welfare, one who for the sake of his talents has overlooked his faults,' sighed Jane, and sat down at her desk :

' If you cannot write to me as if you were married, Mr. Carlyle, you need never waste pen and ink on me more.' (That should give the young man furiously to think !) As for the projected visit, ' NO ! ' She shuddered at thought of the tittle-tattle his coming would occasion at Haddington tea-tables, where people were always eager to gossip about

her, and remembered that even yet Mrs. Welsh was still groaning over the scratches on the drawing-room fender. 'No, a thousand times "NO," Mr. Carlyle.' (How could she make this strange individual realise that infinite guile was necessary in approaching her ?)

Despite such cold comfort, Thomas Carlyle set out one chill Friday in February, determined to accomplish the sixteen miles which separated him from Jane, and pay a Saturday morning call.

A smiling Betty ushered him into the overcrowded drawing-room and an outraged Jane sprang to her feet. She was furious and made no attempt to hide her feelings. With such a man as this frankness was the only possible weapon.

Did he fancy that she had fallen in love with him ? Jane asked hotly. Was he entertaining the splendid project of acquiring her as a reward for his literary labours ?

'Really, sir, I do not deign for you a recompense so worthless,' cried Jane, sweeping a low curtsy. 'For me, falling in love and marrying like other misses is quite out of the question. I have too little romance in my disposition ever to be in love with you—or any other man—and too much ever to marry without !'

'But——' floundered Carlyle. 'But——'

But Jane would not let him speak. 'No !' she flamed. 'But this I will say. *If* you succeed in making yourself an honoured member of society—and for you the pursuit of literary fame is the only way of raising yourself from obscurity—*then* I will be to you a true and devoted friend—but not a mistress. A sister if you will—but not a wife !' Her cheeks were flushed, her eyes shone like stars. 'Oh, why do you force me into making such horrid explanations ?'

‘My feelings towards you are those of an honest man and a true-hearted friend,’ interjected Carlyle, and Jane’s mood changed suddenly.

‘Were I a man I would not wait till others find your worth before saying in the face of the whole world, “I admire you—I choose you for my friend”—but I am a woman, Mr. Carlyle, and what is worse, a young woman—weakness and timidity and bondage are in that word!’ She was adorable in her pathos, but with incredible swiftness this phase passed also.

‘Hush!’ whispered Jane with lifted admonitory finger. ‘My mother!’

Half an hour later Thomas Carlyle withdrew with whirling brain. He wrote two long letters and burnt them, aware that the misuse of a word might sunder him from Jane for ever. Yet what was his offence?

Tentatively he offered a book. What better choice could there be than *L’Influence des Passions sur le bonheur des individus et des Nations*?—and asked humbly for some small word of encouragement. Without such he would be a wreck! Surely, Jane could forget the roughness of his exterior if she thought him sound within?

‘Letters should exhibit the writer’s soul. Let me write to you with frankness and from the heart,’ he begged. ‘The graces cannot live under a sky so gloomy and tempestuous as mine . . . Write to me and may the Great God of the Fatherless ever have you in his keeping.’ After some consideration he signed himself ‘Yours from the heart, Thomas Carlyle.’

Jane read this communication with immense relief. Evidently she had succeeded in reducing this extraordinary young man to order. Well, he should find what happiness he could in playing the part of tutor rather than that of

lover. She sent him her translation of an abstruse passage in *Don Karlos* asking for its revision, and Carlyle attacked the task with enthusiasm.

Jane's voice mocked him in his loneliness, but Jane's face laughed at him between the lines.

Oh, for that treasure which many seek without finding ; a friend, a bosom friend to be ours and ours alone, to have but one soul and spirit with us, to reflect back our every feeling, to love and be loved without measure. *Was Jane such ?*

He thought of her ; her dark eyes, her darker hair, the mobile lips and sparkling vivacity that had charmed him.

Meditatively, Thomas Carlyle lighted his pipe. Jane Welsh had gifts beyond the average, it might be that she possessed that divine spark called genius ; and women of genius could be as ' gey ill t'deal wi' ' as himself. Had Murray, or Mitchell, or even Johnstone come to him for advice when in similar case, Thomas knew well that he might have been brusque in his warnings.

' E'en let the bonny lass gang ! ' would have been his cry—but could such disloyalty be displayed against Jane ? No, a thousand times *no* ! Love would tame her, he told himself ; in her, heart would triumph and keep even genius under control.

Casting doubt aside and turning again to his task, Thomas Carlyle found himself trying to hum a stanza from Burns :

‘ *There's not a bonnie flower that springs,  
By fountain, shaw or green,  
There's not a bonnie bird that sings,  
But minds me o' my Jean.* ’

Forgotten was that bitter day when Margaret Gordon had bidden him an eternal farewell ; dark eyes had van-



quished blue ; Jane's wiles and brief tempestuous passions were infinitely more alluring than Margaret's soft acquiescence in the schemes of her worldly-wise aunt.

The corrected translation was returned to Haddington and, after keeping Carlyle in suspense for a week, Jane sent a gay note written in haste while her mother was calling her. 'Yes,' she was thinking of pursuing a literary career in all seriousness. What could Mr. Carlyle suggest in the way of fruitful subjects ?

Somewhat ponderously, but beguilingly meek, Mr. Carlyle bade her begin to write immediately. 'It is injurious to the faculties to keep poring over books without attempting to exhibit any of our own conceptions,' he told her earnestly, adding that if he could help to free her genius he would count it high reward. As to a subject, remembering her youthful attempt to construct a tragedy, why should she not take Boadicea as her heroine ? Mentally, Thomas Carlyle saw the invasion of the rude palace by Roman soldiery, the Queen beaten like a slave and her daughters maltreated, then her grand uprising when she assembled her oppressed people and bade them arm against the brutal invader.

Here was material in plenty for Jane's quick brain, nor would her imagination be trammelled by dry fact, since the customs of the age of Boadicea could be fashioned according to her fancy.

But, caught in the mesh of social life in sedate little Haddington, Jane's muse would not function ; perhaps because, hidden in her untidy work-basket beneath reels of cotton and skeins of silk, lay one of Edward Irving's rare letters. It was pleasant to be told that her friendship was the consolation of his life but bitter to know that, should he win renown in London, it would be Isabelle Martin, and not

Jane Welsh, who would join him there to share the pulsating life of the great city wherein Jane felt sure that she could have shone.

If Edward Irving could have freed himself from Isabelle's tentacles she, Jane, would have been thinking of a trousseau instead of trying to concentrate on Boadicea. *Yet had the man genius?*—the attribute above all others that was essential in whosoever should become the husband of Jane Baillie Welsh. The girl shook her head doubtfully and remembered Irving's squint; perhaps it was as well that his love for her had bloomed overlate and that Dr. Martin had held his daughter's fiancé to the letter of his bond.

The door opened. God be thanked for the interruption! Thrusting aside her tangled thoughts, Jane held out a welcoming hand.

'A game of battledore and shuttlecock, Dr. Fyffe?—By all means!'

Elf-like the girl leapt this way and that, for, conceited and limited as this strutting little man of medicine might be, he was a useful opponent.

'Twenty . . . thirty . . . forty . . . one hundred!'

Ping, ping, came the impact of cork on parchment, and still the shuttlecock flew between them.

'A hundred and fifty,' cried Jane . . . 'Two hundred!'

Breathlessly the pair desisted and Mrs. Welsh applauded.

'I am as proud of striking that shuttlecock two hundred times as if I had written two hundred admirable verses,' laughed Jane, her skirts billowing around her as she subsided on to a cushion.

She was young and spring was in the air. Visitors came and went, new frocks had to be bought and hats re-trimmed. Men came to take her riding or listen to her singing, and somehow Boadicea daily became more unattractive a theme.

But there, if it pleased Mr. Carlyle to sketch the plot for her he might, and perhaps she, Jane, would fill in the outline on a dull day. Perhaps, too, she would honour Edward Irving by visiting him in London ; it might be amusing to watch him playing the part of worthy husband to an over-adoring wife. Despite her doubts as to his genius, Jane knew that Irving was the soul of honour. Could she have held him had she tried ? Forcing her mind into another channel, Jane told herself that Isabelle should be for ever grateful for whatever happiness came to her through marriage ; remembering Isabelle's claim she, Jane, had bade Irving leave her. Whether he had required that command or not had nothing to do with the point.

‘ Damn Boadicea ! ’

## CHAPTER VII.

### ‘ *THE WISH.* ’

An unexpected result of Irving's ‘ call ’ to London was the offer of a tutorship to Thomas Carlyle. Among the Hatton Garden congregation was a Mrs. Buller with three young sons to educate. She sought the advice of the new minister, who recommended Edinburgh University, under the guidance of his friend, and presently Thomas Carlyle, mellowed by the prospect of two hundred a year in salary, was called upon to meet the three young Bullers, who ranged in age from ten to fifteen.

Routine work began, but the morning hours were still his own, and day after day he sat at his desk striving to clarify his chaotic ideas and concentrate upon a single sub-

ject. Now, he found himself contemplating a series of biographies on eminent people, now planning an essay on the genius and character of Milton, and again jotting down notes for a life of Cromwell.

‘I am twenty-six years old. The noontide of life is fleeting over me and the night cometh when no man can work,’ he told himself, and looking at his disordered papers felt that he was beneath contempt.

Goading himself to a fresh effort, Thomas Carlyle took up his pen, swearing it were more honourable to build a dog-hutch than to dream of building a palace; work he would.

‘Stephen Corry was born in the south of Scotland in a village called Ducktubs; he was the son of a mason’ . . . But somehow, after the first few pages, the pen stuck. Carlyle dropped his head in his hands with a groan; there seemed no one path down which he could force himself; already his mind was wandering in a dozen directions, and he found himself visualising more literary projects than any man could hope to achieve in one lifetime. Yet what had he said to John a few weeks since at Mainhill:—‘On looking over the world the cause of nine parts in ten of the lamentable failures which occur in men’s undertakings, and darken and degrade so much of their history, lies, not in the want of talents, but in the vacillating and desultory mode of using them.’

And what of Jane? She had derided his suggestion of a Boadicean tragedy, refused to write an essay on Madame de Staël, and ignored him when he urged her to continue her translation of *Don Karlos*, though reminded that Coleridge was celebrated for his version of *Wallenstein*; yet perhaps she would collaborate with, and inspire, him?

He believed that he had a spark or two of the poetic

temperament and could jangle words at will. Suppose they two entered into a compact to produce a given number of verses upon subjects to be chosen alternately? Surely so persevering an effort would have good effect? He wrote a hasty challenge and discovered that the morning had fled. It was time for ten-year-old Reggie's lunch, the lunch that frugal Thomas Carlyle contrived to make serve as his dinner.

Jane and her mother came to town for the General Assembly. They shopped and paid calls, sat under Dr. Chalmers (who, having decided that if the fear of Hell could keep the crowd in order they could not have too much of it, was now thundering forth denunciations), and saw that wonder, the Panorama of Naples.

The days fled swiftly, and a happily wearied girl returned to Haddington, forgetful that she had failed in her promise to discuss poesy with Thomas Carlyle. Re-reading his letters, shame overwhelmed her and she vowed to mend her ways.

She would arise at five in the morning; she would read improving books, she would study German, French and Italian too!

Full of good resolutions Jane fell asleep, nor stirred till Betty called her at 9 a.m. Her head ached, she dawdled down to breakfast, after which the dog Shandy enticed her into the garden. Tiring of play, she picked up a volume of Chateaubriand—and fell asleep, to be awakened by Dr. Fyffe with a petition that she would sing to him.

*'I only know we loved in vain—  
I only feel—Farewell! Farewell!'*

trilled Jane, and could have wept because time was passing and she might never, *never* meet Lord Byron in the flesh.

It was late before the little doctor tore himself away, leaving Jane to dress for an ‘odious’ tea-party at which she would make no attempt to sparkle. What had she done since her return from Edinburgh, she asked herself, other than read a silly French novel and a dozen lines of ‘Mary Stuart,’ besides beginning to rewrite an Ode and the first page of two separate novels. In sober truth her most useful piece of work had been the mending of a tear in one of her new dresses. Was this the life that should be led by her father’s daughter?

‘I *will* do better,’ vowed Jane, and opened her desk. She would take up Mr. Carlyle’s challenge; she would write with determination; she would contribute the fortnightly verses as he suggested. Let him set her a subject and he should see!

Meanwhile, what of himself? It seemed pitiable that he should let the years glide by without making any vigorous effort to become known. She wanted her friends to be famous; she wished to see those she loved happy, and filling the station in life for which Nature had designed them.

So great an advance made Thomas Carlyle almost joyful. He forgave Jane her idleness, even her failure to see him in Edinburgh (for which she had prettily excused herself), and for a first ‘subject’ he suggested two words—‘*The Wish.*’ Each was to describe in verse that which was most desired.

Such a theme offered no difficulties to Jane, who wrote in swift reply:

‘Oh, for a valley far away,  
Where human foot hath never been,  
Where sunbeams ever brightly play  
And all is fresh and young and green.

*Oh, for a valley far away  
Where human tongues ne'er uttered sound,  
Where envy, hate and treachery,  
Have never yet an entrance found.*

*There could I spend my peaceful days  
With only One my fate to share—  
One in whose soul's depths I might gaze  
And find my soul reflected there !*

Carlyle's 'Wish' arrived by return coach :

*'With sighs one asks :—"O, might not, could not I,  
From heartless bustle, dungeon-gloom of town,  
With her to love me best, forever fly—  
Mid still retirements, make my soul my own ?"*

*Clear as the summer sun our days might flow  
And bright there end be, like that sun's farewell !*

Jane declined to read anything personal into the lines, and, when replying, told of a certain Writer to the Signet who, having become possessed of a home and money, had just returned to Haddington seeking 'an agreeable young woman' to look after the cooking of his victuals and the strings and buttons of his waistcoats. Arguing that, as Madame de Staël had married twice, and Jane resembled her in intellect she also must be suitable for matrimony, it had been difficult to convince him that he would be better without her, seeing that no creature could digest such puddings as she would concoct, or wear any apparel of her stitching. 'But O Mr. Carlyle !' Jane ended, darting off in another direction, 'if I had your *genius*, your learning, and my own ambition, what a brilliant figure I should make !'

In the interludes between Charles Buller's questions, Carlyle pondered on Jane's meaning and longed to see her.

His estimate of his own powers was low at the moment, for once again a rat seemed to be gnawing at the pit of his stomach. It was Jane, not he, who possessed genius, and if only she would nourish her mind as he directed he believed that she would one day stand in the Temple of Fame, provided always that she did not yield to the importunities of eligible Writers to the Signet.

As for himself, he resembled nothing so much as a moth that had come flickering into his candle a few nights before. Certainly there was an analogy to be drawn between its fate and his own :

*'Tis placid midnight, stars are keeping  
Their meek and silent course in Heaven ;  
Save pale recluse, for knowledge seeking,  
All mortal things to sleep are given.*

*But see ! A wandering night moth enters,  
Allured by taper gleaming bright ;  
A-while keeps hovering round, then ventures  
On Goethe's mystic page to light.*

*With awe she views the candle blazing ;  
A universe of fire it seems  
To moth-savante with rapture gazing,  
Or Fount whence Life and motion streams.*

*What passions in her small heart whirling,  
Hopes boundless, adoration, dread !  
At length, her tiny pinions twirling,  
She darts—and puff !—the moth is dead !*

*Poor Moth ! thy fate my own resembles ;  
Me too a restless asking mind  
Hath sent on far and weary rambles,  
To seek the good I ne'er shall find.*



*Like thee, with common lot contented,  
 With humble joys and vulgate fate,  
 I might have lived, and ne'er lamented.  
 Moth of a larger size and longer date !*

*What gained we, little moth ? Thy ashes,  
 Thy one brief parting pang may show ;  
 And thoughts like these, for soul that dashes  
 From deep to deep, are—death more slow.'*

## CHAPTER VIII.

### SHANDY IS CHAPERON.

Jane's good resolutions had effect. She studied persistently for several hours daily and practised Beethoven till her fingers ached and her mother was exasperated ; for recreation she wept over *Corinne*, finding it a book no one with heart or soul could fail to admire.

Mrs. Welsh refused to share her daughter's rhapsodies and ordained a round of family visits. Jane protested vehemently against the waste of time that should be devoted to improving her mind, but was driven to write a furious note to her dressmaker and renovate an old hat. Fume and fret as the girl might, she knew that her mother would have her way.

Once, it had been something of a treat to visit her grandfather at Templand ; now he struck her as a fidgety old man, and when the party was augmented by the arrival of an aunt and uncle from Liverpool with five squalling children just as the weather broke, the girl cried that she would go demented and be found hanging dead in her garters.

'How,' asked her perplexed grandfather, 'how, my dear Grace, did you contrive to have a daughter so very short, so very sallow, and altogether so very unlike yourself !'

Jane stormed out of the house, saddled a horse and rode till she was exhausted ; upon her return she found her assembled relatives still watching the pitiless rain and wondering ' when it would be fair ' as they placed more basins and tubs to catch the drippings that were forcing themselves through the ceilings.

' What the devil keeps my mother here ? ' cried Jane forlornly. She did not recover her temper until she succeeded in manoeuvring Mrs. Welsh back to Haddington while there was still time to take seats in the ' Good Intent,' and coach to Edinburgh where George IV was at Holyrood in all the glory of a kilt.

Her quick eyes searched the streets. Surely, among this throng of eager people, she would see Mr. Carlyle ? But he, as she might have guessed had she known him better, had fled from Edinburgh, infuriated by what he considered the fulsome flunkeydom of the city fathers, who, by placard, had appealed to the populace to appear as well dressed as possible on this auspicious occasion, ' black coats and white duck trousers ' being the approved wear, ' if at all convenient.'

The fields and hills of Annandale seemed fresh as the newly dug emerald to Carlyle after the stench of Edinburgh's streets. Breathing the clear air of his native heath, he thought of Jane and vowed again that he would make himself known in literary ranks. Was she working steadily these hot summer days and did she realise that her chosen career, if beset with griefs, was the career of the great and noble-minded among men ? God bless her ! If he did not live to see her famous he would die disappointed.

His father watched him silently as he wandered over the fields. The old disappointment that this son, in whose

brain he believed, should not have dedicated himself to the Church still rankled, but at least Thomas was now launched in the world and earning two hundred a year. A round, solid sum, that, one for which a man would submit to much, thought James, remembering his own just pride when in a twelvemonth he had once earned nearly half that amount.

These were busy days on the farm, and from dawn till dark the family worked hard. Thomas was amazed at the ceaseless drudgery, but at night when the others slipped off to bed and he lit his pipe his mother would fold her worn hands and sit near him. 'Gey ill to deal wi' her son might be at times, but she loved him, and when, in fear for his body or soul, she ventured a word of warning he answered her in a way she could understand.

'Don't despair of your *ribe* of a boy, mother. Shy and stingy he may be, and with a higher notion of his parts than others have, but he's harmless and possesses the virtue of his country—thrift. Wait. He'll *do* something yet.'

The peaceful days were restorative in effect; the rat ceased its gnawing and Carlyle felt again the dignity of manhood.

When Mrs. Buller summoned him back to Edinburgh he went willingly, eager for work, and, during the three hours of freedom which were his every morning, he sat at his desk battling with the opening pages of a novel. The hero should be of middle rank, gifted, but weary, wretched and ill-natured. He should speak with a tongue of fire, but beneath his veneer of sarcasm he must be a man of lofty thought and generous affections. Trouble should bring him to the verge of suicide; then, at the eleventh hour, the heroine would appear. She must have Jane's *espigèleries*—Jane's loveliness; she might laugh at him, but then grow serious.

Carlyle wrote, rewrote, read—and tore up all he had written. To make the book a success it should be in the form of letters, and those from the heroine ought to be written by Jane. It must be done, it could be done, but not until he and Jane were nearer.

What was she doing? Bending over Rollin, perhaps, with her maps spread around her? Was he a barbarian to have set such a soft, gentle, spirit so harsh a task? But he knew no primrose path; perhaps he might suggest a holiday when she had reached the seventh volume!

Meanwhile he would write a story for her.

When Jane received the offering she found a heroine patterned on herself as Carlyle saw her . . . 'A slender, delicate creature with black hair and eyes . . . her face as pure as are the lilies. Oh, never was there such another beautiful, cruel, affectionate, wicked, adorable, capricious little gypsy sent into this world for the delight and vexation of mortal man.'

It was a lovely story, thought Jane, re-reading it so often that she knew phrases by heart. She would give her pearl necklace, yea, and four-footed Shandy too, if she could write as well!

How incredible that only eighteen months had passed since she had first met Mr. Carlyle. She gathered Shandy's head into her arms, asking him if he remembered the first coming of that uncouth, sprawling individual? 'Yet, if ever I succeed in distinguishing myself above the common herd of little misses, the honour of my success will belong to Mr. Thomas Carlyle,' she told the dog solemnly.

Mrs. Welsh entered the room and Jane looked up intent on battle. 'Mother, when are we going to stay in Edinburgh?'

'Not at present with all the jam there is to make,' answered

Mrs. Welsh firmly, and attempted a *divertissement* by enquiring why her daughter had cut her hair in the new, but exceedingly unbecoming fashion, and for what reason she had been sewing her bodices to her skirts :

‘To save time for my studies, mamma,’ answered Jane with dangerous sweetness ; and how it came about Mrs. Welsh never understood, but before she left the room Jane had beguiled an invitation out of her. Yes, Mr. Carlyle might come.

‘It’s a twelvemonth since we met,’ said Thomas Carlyle reproachfully.

‘You are now gathering the fruit of my restrictions,’ laughed Jane. ‘Had you come on your own invitation, or mine, you would have been met with cold looks and I should have been on thorns till you left.’

Mrs. Welsh, having dispensed tea graciously, withdrew, intent on the perusal of a new book thoughtfully provided by the visitor ; Carlyle had intended bringing Jane a gift also and had hoped to see her eyes sparkle when he presented Byron’s latest poem, but the booksellers’ shops were ransacked in vain ; the Vice Society was hard on the poet’s trail, and wary men hesitated to stock his works.

Now, the pair sat with a pyramid of history books between them and Shandy as a chaperon.

Girl and dog made an attractive picture in the firelight and Jane was in gentle mood. Carlyle listened with delight while she praised the tale he had submitted with misgiving.

‘Go on ! Write others,’ she urged.

‘With all my heart so you go with me,’ he promised. ‘What a day when *our* book is given to the world !’

‘What am I to write about ?’ asked Jane in unwonted meekness.

‘Obey the impulse of your own genius,’ Carlyle told her, but Jane shook her head.

‘I have no heart to set about building my house on a foundation of sand,’ she answered. ‘Mark out some spot that will not give way beneath my labour—then I will go on *con amore*. Without that, no sooner do I concoct something like a plot than I realise its imbecility and cast it away for another, which, within the hour, seems no better than the first.’

‘Don’t get into such a turmoil about your writing,’ begged Carlyle.

‘I’ll die in a few years without having written anything,’ wailed Jane, ‘die and be forgotten! Don’t laugh at me, Mr. Carlyle.’

‘I do not laugh at anything which makes you unhappy,’ he answered, genuinely disturbed. ‘Believe me, if my power were equal to my willingness your difficulties would be speedily removed. As it is, you must cultivate the virtues of patience and self-command.’

‘I have engaged myself in a pursuit that I no longer have power to give up, yet sometimes I believe myself the greatest ass in God’s creation,’ cried Jane stormily.

‘You’ve been reading that blubbery numskull D’Israeli,’ said Carlyle, guessing at the truth. ‘His *Calamities of Authors* has sunk your spirits. Hang the fellow! Believe me, if one chose to investigate the history of the first twenty tattered blackguards to be found stewing in drunkenness and squalor it would not be difficult to write a much more moving book on the calamities of shoemakers, street porters; or any other craftsmen.’

‘D’Israeli is enough to give one the blue devils for a twelvemonth,’ admitted Jane.

‘Literature has keener pain connected with it than any

other vocation,' asserted Carlyle, 'but then I verily believe it has nobler pleasures. Do not vex and torment yourself. You must acquire far more knowledge before your faculties have anything like fair play. When I was your age I had not half your skill. Rousseau was over thirty before he suspected himself of being anything more than a thieving apprentice—he composed every sentence of his "*Nouvelle Héloïse*" five times over—Cowper became a poet at fifty——'

'If I were only sure that Fame is within my reach—however distant—however difficult the path—I could be happy, but I'm *not* sure,' interrupted Jane.

'The love of Fame will never make a Milton or a Schiller,' answered Carlyle gravely. 'It is the interior fire, the solitary delight which our hearts experience in these things, and the misery we feel in vacancy, that must urge us on, or we shall never reach the goal.'

'But——' interrupted Jane.

Thomas Carlyle's eloquence could not be stemmed by an interjection: 'Do not imagine that I make no account of a glorious name,' he continued, with fire in his eyes. 'I think it the best of external rewards, but never to be set in competition with those within. To depend for happiness on popular breath is to lie at the mercy of every scribbler. It is the *means* to Fame, not the end, that stirs me. If I believed that I had cultivated my soul to the very highest pitch that Nature meant it to reach, I think I should be happy and my conscience at rest; I would actually *be* a worthy man whatever I might seem. It is an indisputable truth that there is nothing lasting in the applause of others.'

'Fame to me is more than the mere applause of a world of people whose individual opinions I should probably consider not worth having,' said Jane, stemming the tide

of Carlyle's eloquence with difficulty. 'It is something that shall extend my being beyond the narrow limits of time and place—it is to bring my heart into contact with hearts that Nature has cast in the same mould and so enable me to hold communion with beings formed to love me, and to be loved by me in return, even when I am divided from them by distance or death itself. I want to be loved as well as admired. To be loved as I love Schiller and De Staël. Indeed, Mr. Carlyle, unless I believed that fame was to bring this about I should not much value it.'

'I am as sure that Nature has given you qualities enough to satisfy every reasonable ambition as I am of my own existence,' vowed Carlyle. 'You will gain both the laurels of intellectual reputation and what our Schiller calls the crown of womanhood—the making happy the heart of man,' he added hoarsely. Dare he tell her of that vacant mathematical professorship at Sandhurst for which he was applying—with a salary of two hundred a year plus house, garden, coal and candles?

Ah, marriage with Jane Welsh would be the most turbulent and incongruous thing in the world! A mixture of honey and wormwood, the sweetest and the bitterest—at one time clear sunshiny weather, then a whirlwind with hail, thunder and the lashing of furious storms all mingled together in the same season. And perhaps, he told himself with sudden clearness of vision, the sunshine would be the most minute in quantity! Yet——

Jane opened her Rollin as Mrs. Welsh entered to ask if Mr. Carlyle would be kind enough to order her a copy of *Delphine*, to which Jane added a demand for Boccaccio. A short time before Thomas Carlyle would have hesitated to fulfil such a commission, now he decided that Jane should venture where she would. Impurity might darken



her mind for a moment, like breath on a mirror, but such would not harm her. Besides, other women read such books. Had not Mrs. Buller spoken of Boccaccio without a blush ?

‘ Good night, Mr. Carlyle,’ said Jane, and he left happy with the neatly written pages of her childish attempt at a tragedy in his pocket, and a growing determination to win her collaboration in his projected novel. It was good to know that he might spend some hours with her on the morrow, and better still to remember that she would be coming to Edinburgh in a fortnight. With quickening pulse he asked himself whether his eloquence would triumph did he ask her to fly with him to some distant glen where they could be for ever alone ? Then a wave of caution assailed him. Glens were places of idleness and privation, and rest must be purchased by toil. The mind’s need was vigorous action.

## CHAPTER IX.

### *JANE GOES TO EDINBURGH.*

Carlyle, returning to Edinburgh on the coach ‘ Good Intent ’ behind such excellent post-horses that the sixteen miles were covered in three hours, found a letter from Irving awaiting him in his Moray Street lodging, together with an enclosure describing his friend’s amazing success in London. The little Caledonian Chapel in Hatton Garden was filled to overflowing Sunday after Sunday. Youth flocked to listen to him ; the carriages of fine ladies blocked the way, and once the Duke of York had been seen in a front pew. Casting aside the newspaper clipping, Carlyle

opened the letter and his eyes fell upon a paragraph that electrified him.

One of Irving's congregation was an editor, and Irving had succeeded in interesting this man in the series of biographies Carlyle had meditated writing. Would he care to make a beginning with the life of Schiller and send it to Mr. Taylor of the *London Magazine*?

Thomas Carlyle wished that he could coach back to Haddington on the 'Good Intent' to see the sparkle in Jane's dark eyes when she heard his news.

Instead, he sat down at his desk. Dogs barked in the street, children quarrelled, a gale tossed the trees and the Firth of Forth moaned. Carlyle wrote and rewrote.

The hours that he was compelled to devote to instructing the young Bullers distracted his thoughts, and he returned to his rooms to read and burn whatever he had left upon his desk. There were days when words would not come and he raged at himself as a pithless ninny. Why could he not either write as a man should, or honestly give up the attempt and beat out his brains?

'Commend me to the Dutch virtue of perseverance,' he exclaimed, pacing his room. 'It is the very hinge of all virtues; without it the rest are little better than fairy gold which glitters in the purse, but when taken to market proves to be slate or cinders.'

Slowly, and with infinite travail, the book was begun. With Jane's last letter in his pocket, Carlyle walked far that night and climbed hills rejoicing. She was coming to Edinburgh at last—Heaven grant that the Bullers did not carry him off to the Highlands before her arrival!

Carlyle returned to his desk with fresh impetus; the task must be finished before Jane came. He urged her to invent some employment that would necessitate a stay of

a month with Bessy Stodart, and to study German seriously so that he might be for ever at her side as tutor.

Jane wrote happily, now of a youthful beggar whom she hoped to help towards fame ; now of her dismissal of Boccaccio and determination never to open him again, and now on her mother's behalf 'praying Mr. Carlyle to buy her half a pound of mustard.'

Occasionally, she wrote of marriage in the abstract, or as desired for her by various relatives. Surely it would be easier to be the Prime Minister, or a Commander-in-Chief, rather than an extremely eligible maiden who could not fall in love to order. 'But there, matrimony under any circumstances would interfere with my plans most shockingly,' explained Jane gravely.

Reading such will-o'-the-wisp-like epistles Thomas Carlyle wondered how his protégée's literary studies were progressing. Did she, too, sweat and toil, and keep laborious vigil, to extract an ingot of solid pewter from the tortured melting-pot ?

One thing he swore : he must never lose sight of Jane in this world or the next.

'Come, Jane, come ! There are nine-hundred-and-ninety-nine things to say to you and as many to hear. Come, Jane !'

Jane came, captivating in new frocks, brimming with enthusiasm for Carlyle's Schiller translations, and ready to listen to the various projects he laid before her with shining eyes. Why should not she prepare a book of *Tales from the German* ? It ought to be possible to interest Boyd, the publisher who was then negotiating with Carlyle for a translation of *Wilhelm Meister*. Could not Jane imagine a beautiful volume for which, perhaps, she would like Thomas Carlyle himself to write a preface ? Or would she prefer

collaborating in a novel? He and she together could surely create such a hero and heroine as the world had never yet known.

‘I wish to God the alacrity of your execution were equal to the boldness of your projects!’ exclaimed Jane.

‘Oh for one solar day beside you!’ cried Thomas Carlyle.

‘*Oh that I were free!*’ whispered Jane, for Mrs. Welsh was calling her already. ‘Yes, mamma—coming, mamma!’ With frowning brow but laughing mouth she cast a backward glance at Carlyle and fled.

Jane’s sparkling looks alarmed her mother. Before many days passed she came to a firm conclusion that it would not do to leave this difficult, too beguiling daughter behind in Edinburgh when she herself went to Dumfriesshire as originally planned. Jane fought strenuously, but was vanquished. The Elysian time to which she had looked forward for months ended abruptly, and for all her contrivings she and Carlyle had but four brief, interrupted meetings.

‘I wish I could fall asleep for a twelvemonth,’ wailed the girl, and Carlyle’s attempts at comfort were abortive. He saw Jane as an eagle condemned to mix with creatures of a lower grade, but in him filial sentiment was strong; Mrs. Welsh meant well, and her daughter must obey with a cheerful heart, even while praying for the time when they two would be independent of other people and free to be to one another all that Nature had intended.

The round of visits ordained by Mrs. Welsh began, and argue as Jane might, study, or regular reading of any kind, was made impossible. Thomas Carlyle sent book after book, but they were rarely forwarded from Haddington; even letters were delayed and sometimes lost. Once a post-mistress recognised the girl as she was travelling from Thornhill to Dumfries and flung a precious epistle into Jane’s lap

as she sat in the coach pinned between two stout gentlemen intent on discussing bullocks.

Carlyle's short supply of patience was evaporating. If Jane could not influence Mrs. Welsh to let her return to Haddington and her studies by fair means, other methods should be tried. She must not submit any longer to constant obstruction, but make herself so difficult a visitor that prolonged stay anywhere would become impossible. 'Ride your host's horses to death,' he urged, 'dispute every word that is uttered . . . do not accept a lot cast among inane people. . . . Suppose this genius that is in us—for there is a kind of genius in both of us, I would swear it on the Evangel—suppose it were developed fully and set before the world! Fame and wealth enough and peace and everlasting love to crown the whole! Oh, my Jane, what a life were ours. . . . But we are foolish persons, both far too ambitious—can we ever be happy? One thing is certain—I *will* love you to the last breath of my life, come of it what may. There is nothing I fear but *for* you' . . .

Jane's heart beat fast. As the coach jolted over the uneven road she tried to scribble an answer, but even to her own eyes the resulting scrawl was illegible, and she prayed that she would be able to steal a few minutes for herself at Dumfries. Alas, the horses were waiting and she had to mount immediately for her twenty-mile ride into Galloway, knowing that from her ultimate destination there was but a weekly post. Should she miss this, no letter could go forth to Thomas Carlyle until she reached Templand days hence, after another ride of almost double the length, yet she had a thousand things to say!

As she rode, Jane told herself that Thomas Carlyle was the only living soul that understood her and his letters were her sole joy. Oh, when would the Wheel of Destiny

turn : When would the world realise his worth, as she did : When would his genius permit him to take his rightful place : She would wish him Fame every hour till there was no further need for such a wish ! For the hundredth time she remembered their first meeting ; it marked an epoch in her life. Then, she had been a miserable, stricken girl, mourning the loss of her father and grieving helplessly in that the mind he had cultivated with unremitting care should be running to waste. Now, there was once again someone loving her who spoke the language of genius and prophesied a glorious future. Thomas Carlyle had given dignity and interest to her life ; in return she must need love him !

‘ Oh, I *will* study ! ’ cried the girl, swaying her lithe body to the movement of her horse. Four hours a day : No—six or eight if Thomas Carlyle wills it !

Jane’s usually too pale cheeks were flushed when she dismounted into her uncle’s arms at Boreland. They were crimson that evening when, for the first time, she heard some of Carlyle’s contributions to Brewster’s *Encyclopædia* criticised and praised ; she felt that had anyone glanced at her they would have imagined her to be the author. If only she could go home and begin steady work Jane felt she would be happy, indeed life would be bearable if the date of return were fixed. With fingers itching to pack, Jane swore to take Thomas Carlyle’s advice and plague everyone about her. To ‘ wait a wee, and wait a wee, and maybe no get what ye’re wanting after a ’ ’ was too bitter to be borne.

Jane’s oft-delayed letter followed Carlyle to Dunkeld, where he had taken up his duties as tutor to the young Bullers, and was fretting himself into a fever, believing that he had offended her. Dismissing the boys, he walked down

to the river and read it marvelling : Jane loved him ! Jane, the most enchanting creature he had ever met.

‘ Thank God, it is not a dream,’ said Thomas Carlyle in all humbleness, and swore that come what may she should be his, as he was hers, through life and death and all the dark vicissitudes that might await them. ‘ Woe, woe to me, if, by any act of mine, I bring unhappiness to my heart’s darling,’ said Thomas Carlyle to the stars above the Scottish hills.

*(To be continued.)*

*EHEU, FUGACES. . . .*

*When on the fullness of the plangent tide  
The old, who are so deep endeared, depart  
Into the silence, ageless, unespied,  
Not merely laceration of the heart  
But an unaltering emptiness will be  
Along the noon and evening of our days ;  
Then we shall stand alone, with none to see  
Through memory’s eyes our childhood, none to praise,  
And we who now can bring the hopes and ploys  
Of busy life to eager, loving ears  
Will more and more be listeners with our joys  
In others rooted as their manhood nears,  
Till at the last we find ourselves the old  
And all our strength a story that is told.*

GORELL.

## THE MASTER OF NONSENSE.

BY R. L. MÉGROZ.

EDWARD LEAR's public to-day does not consist entirely, and probably not even mainly, of children. Adults have kept appreciation alive while nurseries have been distracted by ever-increasing diversions—mechanical, literary and artistic. The truth is that Lear's nonsense drawings and verses offer plenty of scope for adult appreciation, possibly for a wider and deeper appreciation than they have yet received. At least it is a fact that many people to-day know nothing at all of the industrious Victorian artist who apparently by accident became a nonsense author for children. A surprising number of those who do not just look blank when he is mentioned can recall only his collections of limericks, *Nonsense* and *More Nonsense*. Such people are inclined often to prefer later and more polished limericks, forgetting to distinguish between the true nonsense, which is precious, and the pointed wit, which is, even when deserving the name of wit, comparatively common; forgetting also that it is a too severe trial of this *genre* to read through a whole collection of limericks as one reads an ordinary book, even when they are as perfectly illustrated as Lear's. Certainly too many people have forgotten the variety of Lear's nonsense, and the beauty which it achieves every now and then in words or in drawings.

This being so, no wonder Lear's influence is little realised. The debt of later nonsense artists and writers to him is immense, for in the world of pure nonsense, which may be described as pure phantasy, Lear is unique and outstand-



ing. So much recognition has been accorded in this age to the great Victorians, that the realisation comes with a shock of surprise that Lear was one of the greatest of them all, if originality and permanence of achievement be the proper test of greatness.

It might be said that his life was a quiet one, though not exactly uneventful, since even a modern traveller would feel respect for his indefatigable itineraries. Lear was indeed a quiet man whose time was divided between work and the claims of friendship. The two volumes of his *Letters* edited by Lady Strachey show that he gave himself without stint to both. A reading of the *Letters* and the brief published accounts of his life (most of the information for which is in a letter written by himself) reveal a lovable person who worked hard and suffered much from melancholy and a sense of frustration. He had the makings of a much greater serious artist than he was, and of a poet as fine, let us say, as his friend Tennyson. External circumstances and certain peculiarities of his temperament which would not be obscure to a psychologist appear to have stifled his creative energy in those normal directions, but the power of his genius achieved a partial expression along a channel which it found almost haphazardly, when he began making comic drawings and rhymes to amuse the Earl of Derby's children.

The youngest of twenty-one children in his family, Edward Lear was born on May 12, 1812, at Highgate, and died on January 29, 1888, in San Remo. His family was Danish, and had settled in England and become naturalised towards the end of the eighteenth century. They were poor, and Lear lost no time in earning money. In his own words : ' I began to draw for bread and cheese, about 1827, but only did uncommon queer shop-sketches—selling them for prices varying from ninepence to four shillings : colour-

ing prints, screens, fans; awhile making morbid disease drawings for hospitals and certain doctors of physic. In 1831, through Mrs. Wentworth, I became employed at the Zoological Society, and, in 1832, published *The Family of the "Psittacidæ,"* the first complete volume of coloured drawings of birds on so large a scale published in England, as far as I know . . .'

This is a very casual account of a remarkable beginning to an artistic career. It bristles with interesting questions. Those 'uncommon queer shop-drawings' may have pre-saged the later nonsense drawings, and the style may have been acquired from a study of the eighteenth-century broad-sheets, in which a naïve art well adapted to crude woodcuts flourished and as late as this century inspired the Lovat Fraser style of illustration. The anatomical drawings lead straight to Lear's zoological drawings, in which he was apparently the first important artist. His work at the Zoological Society and the notable collection of *Psittacidæ* (Parrots) caused the Earl of Derby to employ him to draw the birds in the menagerie at Knowsley. He illustrated also Gould's *Indian Pheasants* and works by other zoologists involving reptiles and animals. The Earl of Derby became an influential patron of the young man and Lear spent the best part of three or four years at Knowsley.

The employment at Knowsley proved helpful to Lear professionally, not only by continuing his zoological studies in comfortable circumstances, but through his personal contacts with other wealthy and influential people, many of whom became subscribers to his expensive books of classical landscapes which soon afterwards he made the mainstay of his livelihood. One can well imagine that illustrations for scientific books of natural history, however good of their kind, would provide the artist with only starvation rations,

except when he could stay with such a patron as Lord Derby. But that branch of his work proved Lear to have been a competent draughtsman with an artistic flair for non-human life. Most of those zoological books with his illustrations are rare to-day because there is no demand for them, but the illustrations are often obviously of permanent value. His brilliant Parrots must always give pleasure, and his Tortoises and Turtles, for example, are gorgeous creatures, for he delighted in the patterns and colours of their polished shells, while making careful drawings that would be approved of by experts. In other words, one finds behind the draughtsmanship a vitality that comes from the artist's pleasure in his subjects.

It is this combination of factual knowledge and artistic verve which explains the superiority of Lear in so many nonsense drawings. Generally speaking, the human figures are sheer nonsense, true enough to something in the artist himself, yet marvellously child-like in manner (though much better drawn than anything done by a child); while the non-human forms constantly reveal a highly sophisticated technique subdued to the nonsensical *élan*. This peculiar skill with the non-human forms is well shown in the wonderful *Nonsense Botany*, where you feel that every one of those absurd plants ought to exist, if not already in existence! You may call them parodies of plants, but many a realistic representation of an actual plant is less alive and 'real.'

Lear's purely zoological drawings have their counterpart in his careful landscape pictures, which he himself termed mere 'topographies.' His devotion to clear and accurate detail, his avoidance of suggestion or evanescence of impression, such as Turner, for instance, would exploit in clouds and misty light, may have been encouraged by his devotion

to the Pre-Raphaelite ideal of honesty in detail (though we must not forget that the greater part of what is supposed to be Pre-Raphaelitism was the invention of Ruskin). Lear declared himself a Pre-Raphaelite in his sympathies, but the ultimate effect of his classical landscapes is that of a rigid formalism strictly adhering to an established convention. Only in the sketches which he made in the open does one find the freedom of individuality which might have been embodied in more important works. In some ultimate estimate of Lear's serious pictures, his water-colours may emerge with his rough pen-and-pencil sketches above the majority of those more elaborate compositions of historic and archæological interest which attracted rich subscribers. Nevertheless, even the reproduction of some of these in the volume of his *Letters* inspires more than mere respect. It is not difficult to understand and approve of the decision made by so many distinguished men of his time to present, for example, the oil-painting of the Temple ruins of Bassæ to the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, or that of Argos to Trinity College. And Tennyson's pleasure was justified in Lear's landscape illustrations of his poems.

*' Illyrian woodlands, echoing falls  
Of water, sheets of summer glass,  
The long divine Peneian pass,  
The vast Akrokeraunian walls,*

*Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,  
With such a pencil, such a pen,  
You shadow forth to distant men,  
I read and felt that I was there. . . .'*

Better travellers than Tennyson rejoiced in Lear's landscapes, though the taste for his classical and archaic subjects was

really a survival of an eighteenth-century fashion. This fact suggests that Lear may have deliberately subdued himself for professional purposes to a conventional taste in landscape and that it was not alone the inability to be a bolder and more original artist that limited his landscapes. The phrase 'I read' in Tennyson's lines to Lear referred to the text of the *Journals of a Landscape Painter*, which, though not exciting, is often filled with the interest of his subject.

Lear began this kind of work while wintering in Rome for his health from 1837 to 1840, publishing in 1841 a volume of lithographs entitled *Rome and its Environs*. In subsequent visits to Italy he gave lessons in drawing and made energetic tours of Southern Italy and Sicily. He also stayed in or visited Malta, Greece, Albania, Constantinople, the Ionian Islands, Mount Sinai, Egypt, Corfu, Jerusalem and Syria, periodically returning to England to attend to publication of his illustrated *Journals* and to exhibit pictures and visit patrons. During one of his periods in England at the beginning of this energetic life, in 1846, he gave Queen Victoria drawing lessons, a safe indication of the esteem in which he was held by influential people.

Between 1864 and 1876 Egypt, Malta, Nice and Cannes were his favourite winter resorts, but from Cannes he returned to Italy, being very dissatisfied with the sales of pictures to British visitors and probably desiring to 'settle' somewhere. He had a villa built for him at San Remo with a lovely garden which became his delight, and named it the 'Villa Emily' after the granddaughter of his sister who had married and settled in New Zealand. His most adventurous journey, though not fraught with actual dangers like his tours of wild places in Albania and Calabria, was undertaken in 1874-5, at the age of sixty-two, when Lord

Northbrook, Governor-General, invited him to visit India. As usual, his travel resulted in many sketches.

Ill health seems to have troubled him increasingly, and augmented his pessimistic worrying and a deep-seated melancholy, though generally one has to read between the lines of his letters to realise the gloom behind the friendly banter and facetious humour. It is an indication of his nervous unhappiness in the latter part of life that the building of an hotel opposite his 'Villa Emily' became a terrible affliction. Although able to build another villa which he named the 'Villa Tennyson,' in beautiful surroundings at San Remo, he was unable to adapt himself to the change, and the last seven years of his life appear to have been more and more clouded with worry and ill health.

'It is always a great thing to find that longer and closer knowledge of character makes it more esteemed and liked,' he wrote in reference to his friend Chichester Fortescue, and that was precisely the discovery made by Lear's intimates about him, from young English noblemen to his faithful Suliote man-servant, Georgio. He was appreciated by a few women for his interesting personality and loyal friendship, but he seems to have missed or avoided the deeper phases of experience in such contacts, though one may suppose that a feeling of frustration and disappointment was buried in him. If this is so, it found the discreet expression of such beautiful nonsense as he gives us in 'The Courtship of the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bò.'

The important development of his nonsensical art in words and line is like a separate strand in the tale of his activities, beginning inconspicuously but ultimately dominating our view of his work. The whimsical personality behind the laborious artist and friend of noble families was suggested by Lear himself when a young lady wrote to

him at San Remo telling him that when a friend of hers heard that she knew Lear, the friend exclaimed, 'How pleasant to know Mr. Lear !' He wrote back a set of verses beginning :

“ *How pleasant to know Mr. Lear !* ”  
*Who has written such volumes of stuff !*  
*Some think him ill-tempered and queer,*  
*But a few think him pleasant enough.*

*His mind is concrete and fastidious,*  
*His nose is remarkably big ;*  
*His visage is more or less hideous,*  
*His beard it resembles a wig . . .*

When that was written Lear was already known more widely for his nonsense than for his serious pictures. This occasioned a few wry phrases from him in letters, though he seemed pleased at the signs of popularity gained by *The Book of Nonsense*, first published in 1846. An enlarged edition of this collection of limericks and comic drawings was issued in 1862. In the '70's *Nonsense Songs, Stories, Alphabets, Botany, Cookery*, and more of the limericks appeared, and the 1877 volume, *Laughable Lyrics*, included for the first time some of his music, for Lear could delight his friends by singing the *Nonsense Songs* to tunes with which he accompanied himself on the piano. These were played by ear and only two were preserved in script.

In his remarkable combination of original writer and artist there is nobody but D. G. Rossetti to compare with him in the Victorian Age, though at first sight a contrast rather than a comparison will be suggested by Rossetti's name. Except in the sphere of nonsense, where he is undisputed master, Lear falls short of greatness in art and literature, and yet nobody else in his time except Rossetti proved

himself an original genius in those two fields. As an influence Lear is the more enduring of the two, because he was virtually the originator of a new *genre*. Nonsense before had been usually realistic and satirical in art—pure nonsense was unknown as a vehicle of expression. In literature it had occurred but rarely and spasmodically—there had never been a nonsense author.

Mr. Anton Lock, a student of art as well as an artist, not only agrees that Lear was the first artist of his kind but that his influence is world-wide. Only a few typical names can be introduced here, but starting with England Mr. Lock sees Lear's widespread influence in modern work beginning with the nonsense drawings of Lear's contemporary, 'A Nobody,' which was the pen-name of Gordon Browne, the son of 'Phiz.' Those books of drawings by 'A Nobody' were popular in their time, though now forgotten, and they may yet enjoy a revival. From them Tom Browne derived his style until he modelled it again on Phil May. There are too many twentieth-century artists who might be mentioned, though among contemporaries the name of Bateman would occur to anybody who looks at Lear's illustrations to the limericks and some of the *Nonsense Songs*. When Lear draws non-human objects isolated in space, as he often does in the *Alphabets*, we are reminded of the Lovat Fraser style, which has already been referred to. Fraser eventually mimicked the old broadsheets. He was fond of securing the effect of the woodcut technique of the Crawhall books by sketching, and that is what Lear often did. Just look at Lear's 'Tortoise and Owl,' 'Fish' or 'Goodnatured Grey Gull' in the *Alphabets*. Fraser's addition of nonsense words to his own drawings merely emphasises the likeness to Lear. Lear's animal groups (see, for instance, the Zebra carrying the monkeys, in one



of the *Alphabets*) are distinctly the forerunners of the famous 'Zig-Zag' series of animal drawings by J. A. Shepherd. But the old *Punch* thumb-nail drawings which used a childish technique to amuse adults may have inspired Lear to do the same for children. Moreover, 'Dicky' Doyle, who designed the *Punch* cover, was beginning work at the same time as Lear, as Mr. Jan Gordon has reminded me.

Lear's influence abroad is even more remarkable at a time when criticism is beginning to credit other British artists with an influence on the Continent hitherto unrecognised. Much French caricature followed the tradition of our eighteenth-century Hogarth and Rowlandson, but a new vein appeared last century that is traceable to Lear. It is seen in the nonsense drawings of Doré, and the weird figures of Caran d'Ache, who began in the 1880's; but the satirical vein persisted in France, and in Forain again dominated comic art for a time in a style alien to childish nonsense. In Germany, however, a large proportion of comic art until our own times derives from Lear. Wilhelm Busch ('the Lear of Germany') in his comic drawings is sometimes indistinguishable from the Lear who illustrated the limericks, 'The Jumbles,' and 'The Four Little Children.' The academic Rowlandson manner in Germany was offset also by Oberlander in his nonsense drawings of animals. Like Lear he uses a skilful draughtsmanship for non-human life while maintaining the nonsensical spirit. Olaf Gul Branson in *Simplicissimus* adopted a deliberately childish manner of drawing in a strip-series style which, deriving from Lear, is typical of much modern press work. The work of these artists in *Fliegenden Blätter*, especially the comic animals, extends the field of such comparisons. What is true of much continental work can also be said of American comic art. A representative example is Zimmerman, who in *Puck*

towards the end of last century was drawing comic types with Lear's technique, that combined skill and childish *naïveté*. A slight acquaintance with more recent work will enable anyone to trace Lear's influence still further.

All this is remarkable enough about a Victorian so much forgotten by this age of clever mediocrity, but it is only half the story, since the same is true of Lear's writings. There, too, Lear is a skilful technician when he wishes to be, while reaching a purer source of nonsense than anybody else, except for a few superb isolated compositions by others.

A possible source of Lear's comic style in drawing has been indicated in eighteenth-century woodcut illustrations, and it is interesting that his limerick is adopted from a doggerel form of nursery rhyme that was well known in the eighteenth century. Lear made the limerick vogue, and caused contemporaries like Rossetti and Swinburne to amuse themselves with it. Many of Rossetti's publishable limericks are included in his published work. Most of Swinburne's were unprintable. It is noticeable that Rossetti usually makes the opening line-end repeat in the final line, as Lear did. Most later compositions in this verse form introduce a new rhyming word for the last line, which helps to make the limerick more pointed, but at the same time usually assists the writer to get away from pure nonsense to wit. It is very rash to assume, as Mr. Langford Reed does, that this form is a great improvement on the Lear form, or to dismiss Lear's limericks as merely crude. Certainly he wrote them carelessly; they were written to make children laugh, and often like his drawings they seem to employ the minimum of sophisticated skill. Mr. Reed, who, by the way, thinks that Thomas Moore originated the limerick, has made himself an authority upon the form and is indeed a champion and historian of nonsense verse,

but it is to be feared that he inclines too much to favour polish and wit, and is not really appreciative of genuine nonsense which belongs to the order of fantastic creation.

Fantasy is the peculiar quality of Lear nonsense, with an effect of sheer fun, to which is added a humorous sadness inspired by a difficult world. We must beware of not distinguishing between meaningless jingle and nonsense that is full of humorous feeling. Such a warning is not uncalled for when Mr. Reed in his *Nonsense Verses* anthology includes the well-known sailors' chanty, 'The Banks of Sacramento,' and describes it as 'nonsense verse.' This is entirely devoid of humour or wit or music, and belongs to a different order of composition, if such chants can be called composition. But in the very crudity of a limerick there can be a concealed wit. The effect of crudity is assisted by repeating the first end-line. It is a pity that the editor of *The Complete Limerick Book* did not realise this when he described Rossetti's limericks as poor, preferring many polished later inanities, and actually telling the public that 'one of the worst limericks ever perpetrated' is the following by Rossetti :

‘ There is a dull painter, named Wells,  
Who is duller than anyone else,  
With the face of a horse  
He sits by you and snorts—  
Which is very offensive in Wells.’

Since Rossetti used the form to make fun, especially to make fun of his friends and himself, one can but feel bewildered at such a judgment by the self-made authority upon nonsense. If Mr. Reed feels there is nothing to be said for this limerick, no wonder he is inclined to patronise those of Lear as crude experiments instead of outstanding models. Perhaps he objects to the poet making you snort

the word 'horse' in the obviously deliberate imitation of a real rhyme. Much preferable is the opinion of Mr. Aldous Huxley, who is a very clever and sensitive man, in spite of his novels.

In *On the Margin* (1923) Mr. Huxley not only shows how Tennyson's lyric that begins :

*'Row us out from Desenzano,  
To your Sirmione row !  
So they row'd, and there we landed—  
O venusta Sirmio !'*

was probably inspired by a tuneful memory of the 'Yonghy-Bonghy-Bò' poem :

*'On the coast of Coromandel,  
Where the early pumpkins blow,  
In the middle of the woods,  
Lived the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bò,'*

but he has the courage to prefer Lear's, and then becomes so enthusiastic over the *Nonsense* limericks that (surprisingly to some of us) he regards them as the cream of Lear's genius. This is in spite of the fact that he was probably the first responsible critic to proclaim the high quality of poetry in Lear's songs. (For example, he also declares, with absolute justice, 'change the key ever so little and the "Dong with the Luminous Nose" would be one of the most memorable romantic poems of the nineteenth century.') Gratitude is due to Mr. Huxley also for reminding us that the modern nonsense drawings of Mr. Nash were an imitation which only proved Lear's superiority as the original nonsense artist.

The uniqueness of Lear in literature is not difficult to maintain. As in art, the comic vein had been used in literature mainly with a satirical intention and without the

true childishness of inspiration. The result is that nearly all such compositions are dull to read, except in relation to their satirised background. Who would read Butler's *Hudibras* for fun? When the composition is less controlled by such secondary intellectual intentions, as in some of Matthew Prior's, Thomas Hood's, William Cowper's, Oliver Goldsmith's, Robert Burns's and (one almost trembles to say their names here) Barham's and Gilbert's humorous verse, there is still the heavy-footed movement of the adult being facetious instead of the pure fun of the child which everyone whose soul is not dead can share.

To trace in detail the effects of Lear's influence in modern nonsense literature would be too lengthy a process here. It seems that he set up a new standard and released an unused inspiration. Just as many a serious artist made nonsense drawings in a casual way for children, so many a writer of genius no doubt wrote nonsense at times, without thinking of publication or even giving the nonsense the rounded shape that publication would call for. One thinks of those delightful illustrated letters to his children by Burne-Jones which surely were encouraged by a knowledge of Lear, and of the nonsense drawings by the solemn French artist, Jean François Millet. Such instances could be multiplied indefinitely. Perhaps to-day the extreme has been reached, when any sort of mediocre silliness is supposed to be suitable to amuse children. Much inferior to Lear as a poet, Lewis Carroll is the only nonsense writer comparable with him in importance. Carroll's is a highly sophisticated kind of nonsense perhaps only possible to a highly intellectual man such as he, but his true sympathy with the little girls he wanted to amuse preserved its essential quality. Nevertheless, if we compare Carroll's verse with Lear's (which is perhaps unfair, as he was a nonsense prose writer) we

find that though very clever it misses Lear's spontaneity in effect, and usually makes wit supply the lack of fantasy. And while his artfully made portmanteau words are excellent to convey suggestions, they are not created like Lear's coined words for atmosphere and music. Carroll resembled Lear in manner in *Sylvie and Bruno* rather than in the famous 'Alice' books. The 'King Fisher's Wooing' Song, for example :

"*Yet pins have heads," said Lady Bird—*  
SING PRUNES, SING PRAWNS, SING PRIMROSE  
HILL !

"*And where you stick them in,*  
*They stay, and thus a pin*  
*Is very much to be preferred*  
*To one that's never still !"* . . .

It is doubtful if he would have written so but for *Laughable Lyrics*.

In conclusion, it will be worth stressing the antiquity of nonsense in literature while indicating a possible source of inspiration for Lear's nonsense songs, so we may adopt Mr. Langford Reed's reminder of the translation of *Aristophanes* by J. Hookham Frere. Mr. Reed interestingly suggests that the original of the 'The Knights' passage about the Horses may have suggested to Swift the idea of the Third Voyage of Gulliver. Even more likely was it an inspiration to Lear, Frere's translation having been published in 1839, and we know from his letters that Lear was interested in contemporary verse and inclined to parody it.

"*Let us sing the mighty deeds of our famous noble steeds.*  
*They deserve a celebration for their service heretofore.*  
*Charge and attacks, exploits enacted in the days of yore :*  
*These, however, strike me less, as having been performed ashore.*  
*But the wonder was to see them, when they fairly went aboard*

*With canteens and bread and onions, victualled and completely  
stored,  
Then they fixed and dipped their oars, beginning all to shout  
and neigh,  
Just the same as human creatures, "Pull away, boys! Pull  
away!"*  
*"Bear a hand there, Roan and Sorrel! Have a care there,  
Black and Bay!"*  
*Then they leapt ashore at Corinth; and the lustier younger sort  
Strolled about to pick up litter, for their solace and disport:  
And devoured the crabs of Corinth as a substitute for clover . . .'*

If Lear, who is comparatively a modern, did so much more than anybody else to bring nonsense into art and literature, the question arises, where was the spirit of nonsense adequately expressed in earlier times? The mention of Aristophanes suggests the answer. It was on the stage, and apparently while clowning has largely faded away from the stage in the past century, it has flourished more and more in books and journals, and lately in films. Clowning was always much more than 'comic relief' from tragedies on the stage; it has always been in some degree a relief from the hard realities of life, and in this escape of the unquenchable springs of human laughter we have the very image of the source of poetry itself and all creative art. Perhaps very often laughter is released when Beauty is frustrated. They are profoundly akin, and in the finest expression of the nonsensical spirit there must be some strain of that beauty which is born in the throes of creative imagination. If such an argument seems very solemn and portentous to apply to the best work of Lear's genius, just pass it over and enjoy the work itself. But a serious appreciation of Lear's importance in our crowded epoch is probably necessary to a wider enjoyment of his work.

## THE MAN WHO NAMED A CONTINENT.

BY CAPPY RICKS.

'I NAME the whole land Australia,' said Flinders on his too-early death-bed, and thereby settled in a word the contentions of geographers down the aisles of time. It was right and fitting that he should have named the new land, for he it was who had dragged the great southern continent out of the dark unknown—a continent mysterious, immense, and romantic—and proved it to be an island. Matthew Flinders, Captain R.N., the greatest explorer-surveyor and denominator of all time (he in four years named more than a thousand Points, Islands, Capes, Straits, and Mountains. And not one after himself, for Flinders Island in Bass Strait had been named after him, when as a Midshipman he had accompanied Bass, by Governor Philip, while the island of the same name off the North Queensland coast and Flinders Bay in West Australia were named by the explorer after his brother, a Lieutenant in the ship, who had been the first to sight the island, and who had surveyed the Bay by the ship's cutters, not to mention a Continent) left England in 1799 in H.M.S. *Investigator* to explore and survey the coasts of New Holland and, a thousand leagues to the east, New South Wales, or Botany Bay, also to explore the sea that was presumed to exist between the two great discoveries.

In the four following years he surveyed the coasts mentioned, found the great gulfs of St. Vincent and Spencer's in the south and Carpentaria in the north, and proved that no interior sea existed, much to the perturbation of the geographers of the day.



This was, beyond doubt, the greatest survey of all time, conducted in the most heroic manner by a skilful and indomitable leader, who during all operations spent all and every day at the masthead of his ship slung in a half-barrel having a small table-top, with cases for his instruments.

As a feat of sustained endurance this is unique in the annals of the sea and the history of exploration, but it led to an early death.

At the conclusion of the survey the *Investigator* returned to Port Jackson, now Sydney, and was then found to be so rotten as to be beyond repair ; so she was condemned, and Flinders and his ship's crew were given passages on H.M.S. *Porpoise* and *Bridgewater*, and their consort *Cato*, which ships sailed for England, via Torres Strait and Timor, in August, 1803 ; and with Flinders, of course, went all the important results of the long and epoch-making survey.

A week after leaving Port Jackson the *Porpoise*, in which Flinders was a passenger, running heavily before a southerly gale at night, crashed on an uncharted reef in the Coral Sea and quickly, with large loss of life, became a total wreck. Her consort, *Cato*, shared the same fate, but *Bridgewater*, ignoring the signals of distress that were at once made, sailed on—a callous action never subsequently explained away.

Flinders and his valuable documents survived the wreck, and then he, as the senior officer present, took command of the party. Out of the timber saved from the wreck he constructed a 24-foot open boat, and in this frail craft he and six men sailed to Port Jackson over 1,400 miles of stormy sea for succour, charts and documents being taken in a water-proofed canvas bag ; the desperate voyage was a long and tedious one, marked by great hardship and privation.

A ship was at once sent for the castaways, and as there was not a man-of-war to go to England for some months,

Flinders and his six seamen sailed for home in a small 29-ton schooner named *Cumberland*, the only available vessel then in the Colony, taking with him his charts and documents, and also, unfortunately as it transpired, despatches from Governor King for personal delivery to the Secretary of State.

In these despatches the Governor furnished a long and comprehensive account of the activities, which he viewed with a certain amount of suspicion, of various French and Spanish expeditions then, or recently, in southern seas. (England was then, so far as was known in the far-off land, at peace with all the world, so it was permissible for the Governor to entrust despatches to the commander of an expeditionary ship, even though such vessel was operating under a 'safe-conduct of all nations,' but, in the event, the act was disastrous to the bearer of the despatches; through them he was detained as a prisoner in a foreign land for six and a half years at the hands of a Power with which our nation became at war.)

Flinders surveyed along the route with his tiny vessel, and discovered the *Cumberland* Passage through the Great Barrier Reef and a passage between a group of islands, to which he gave his ship's name, off the north-west coast of the Continent, making then for the open sea, the great quadrilateral of the Southern Indian Ocean, on his way to the Cape of Good Hope and home.

During this long run of 6,000 miles his old and decrepit vessel developed serious defects; she leaked like a basket, and stores were ruined. Fresh water was also running short, and this determined Flinders to bear away for the Isle de France, now Mauritius, for provisions and repairs.

On arrival off the coast of the island he found himself beset among coral reefs, and, having no chart or Sailing

Directions to guide him, he made towards a small vessel which he observed to be leaving a small bay to the southward of him, with the intention of obtaining a pilot. He was, of course, flying the White Ensign. When this was observed by the French vessel she immediately put about to return to harbour.

Flinders crowded on sail and followed, and on arrival anchored near the vessel that had led him in, to find the harbour and town in a state of great agitation. This, unknown to Flinders, was due to his appearance on the coast and his following of the local vessel. France and England were at war again, and his action was construed as an overt act. The following day he was compelled to proceed to Port Louis, the capital, and there he and his ship were seized by Governor De Caen. His bona fides were not accepted. His safe-conduct and passport had been granted for H.M.S. *Investigator*, a large and powerful ship engaged on a scientific expedition, and De Caen refused to believe that an officer of such high attainments and authority as the explorer was known to be could be travelling in such a vessel as the tiny *Cumberland* instead of the large ship whose name figured in the cartel.

The despatches, which had been seized, assumed now a sinister importance, due to the existing state of war, particularly so because war had broken out over four months before Flinders' departure from the new colony—an interval ample for the conveyance of the news from England to Australia. It was unfortunate that the ship conveying the intelligence was a slow one and did not arrive for a fortnight after the *Cumberland* had left. It was just as unfortunate that Baudin, the great explorer, to whom Flinders was well and personally known, should have left Port Louis with his two ships just the day before; and also that there had been on board

Baudin's ship a self-appointed spy, Peron the Naturalist, who had repaid the hospitality of his official hosts in Port Jackson during his lengthy stay there by drawing information of a military character from them and embodying the same in a long report which was marked by his own acrimonious antipathy towards the British nation.

De Caen had seen this report, and though he had condemned it for the treachery it displayed he still could not be insensible to the nature of its contents and, to some extent, be influenced by the information it conveyed.

There was every condition conducive to misunderstanding on the part of both men. Each was of considerable distinction in his own profession, and perhaps slightly haughty and insistent upon every mark of respect and courtesy due to their rank and high office. The nerves of each were somewhat frayed : in Flinders' case by illness of body and mortification of high spirit, and in De Caen's by the responsibility for the defence of his island-country, which had insufficient force to protect it and its inhabitants, and which was even then threatened by a powerful British fleet. After a long and painful interview the first gesture for peace was made by the French Governor ; he invited Flinders to dine with himself, his gracious lady and his principal officers that evening. Flinders' reply was that ' while a prisoner he could not, and would not, accept his gaoler's hospitality.' De Caen's significant rejoinder was to the effect that he would next invite Flinders after he had released him—' after ' never came.

The first few months' confinement was in a temporary prison in the low-lying town of Port Louis. The prisoner's health declined, and at his own request he was removed to the prisoners-of-war barracks on the hill, where, in better and more congenial surroundings, he regained his health.

After eighteen months' incarceration he was released on parole and permitted to take up his residence on the interior tableland nearly 2,000 feet above sea-level, and here, among true and delightful friends that he had made, Flinders led an interesting, healthy and satisfying life for five years, the only irritating circumstance being the enforced detention and prolonged separation from home and friends. He had married just before leaving England on his cruise of discovery, and was passionately attached to his wife.

His nature endeared him to everyone with whom he came in contact, excepting De Caen, and to this day he is spoken of with deep affection by the descendants of his immediate circle of friends. He became a keen French scholar and an ardent naturalist and meteorologist. He worked up and charted all the discoveries of his cruise and, always a scientific navigator, he studied to good effect the effect of iron construction upon ships' compasses, and devised a highly ingenious means, entirely by mathematics as against practice, of nullifying a large amount of the error caused by the presence of iron in a wooden vessel, and also by the hull of any ship built of this metal, a practice then coming into vogue ; the means that he discovered is as important to-day as ever, and it still bears his name.

For a while the French Governor took no steps either to verify or refute the truth of his prisoner's assertions, though eventually he did so, and, after two years, there arrived an order for the captive's release. By this time, though, conditions had worsened for the besieged force at the Isle de France, and De Caen was compelled by desperate circumstances to withhold the execution of the order. The defences of the isle were little better than a sham, marked by every possible weakness, and this, of course, was clear and apparent to the trained eye of the prisoner, as De Caen well knew,

and no sane commander could take the risk of releasing an enemy, as Flinders, British Naval Officer of high rank, then was, knowing that, even under the most scrupulous parole, it would mean the great investing force, of nearly 200 ships and 16,000 men, becoming aware of the undefended state of the garrison and the country, and making capture imminent and inevitable.

Flinders' release was only effected by the fall of the island to British forces in 1810. Broken in health, he lived only another three years in England. He spent this time directing and making his charts and otherwise consolidating his great discoveries, but he was too far disabled to attempt further exploration. It was his intention to lead an expedition across the new continent from the south, which he had discovered and charted, to the Gulf of Carpentaria, which he had surveyed, in the north, but he was never able to undertake this great work. He died at the early age of thirty-nine, a victim of unfortunate circumstances ; a loss to his beloved country and to science, but a gain to future generations. His example and history keep alive the principles that actuated this brave soul and high spirit.

The French nation in general, and the Governor and officers of the Colony of Mauritius in particular, treated Flinders' important documents with a most scrupulous and high honour, and did not, in any shape or form, notwithstanding various historians to the contrary, avail themselves of their important contents in even the slightest degree. Honour where it is due.

*KALLEE.*  
*A TALE FROM THE FIELDS.*

BY F. G. TURNBULL.

I WILL never shoot a partridge again ; that is a vow I have sworn. I still hope to use my gun through many years to come ; but when the coveys rise before me in root or stubble field hereafter, I will keep my weapon at ' trail ' and let them go. My spaniel, Roy, will gaze at me with wonder in his dear old eyes ; but he will soon understand that the brown birds are not our game—now that we have known Kallee, that great cock partridge.

Of the four people most intimately acquainted with Kallee, I believe that I knew him best. In and out of season I watched him ; and Sandy McIntosh, the keeper, told me all that he learnt about the bird. Thus I have been able to fill up the blanks in his history. I myself took no active part in it till near its conclusion, so I shall keep out of the story till then.

Balbracken, the estate whereon the partridge ranged, belonged to John Blair, a rare old sportsman ; but at the time of this story the shooting was let to Syme Bryant, a business man, whose business principles also ruled his field sports. He demanded the uttermost value for his money, and shot with a ruthlessness that rendered him extremely unpopular with both keeper and proprietor. And now that you know us all, we'll get on with the story.

The summer had been grey with rain that year when Kallee was born, and it was not until the last night of July

that he chipped the olive egg that held him. He was a gay little sprite from the outset, buoyant of spirit, eager to learn, and desperately anxious to see everything. His first four weeks were weeks of enchantment, of fun and frolic with his parents and the other ten chicks of the family. Then came the 1st of September—the opening day of the partridge-shooting season.

During the afternoon, while the covey moved about the furrows of a root field, one of the parents uttered a low cluck of warning. The chicks crouched in their tracks, listening to the rustle and tear of turnip-leaves being thrust aside. Then they heard for the first time the sound of a human voice : ‘ Steady, Belle, steady ! ’ as Sandy McIntosh cautioned an over-eager dog.

The old birds knew what the thud of human tread and the panting of dogs portended. The pair stirred slightly, and brown wings were eased for the swift uprising that would draw the shot while the chicks might scatter in safety. Kallee, precocious and imitative, wriggled his feet as his father did, and held out his little wings. The rustle of footsteps was now just at hand.

There sounded a sudden clucking command that meant : ‘ A moment wait—then fly.’ A quick burst of whirring followed as strong pinions beat violently upward. Kallee, disobedient and determined to accompany his father, rose at his parent’s flank. There was a snapped exclamation : ‘ Mark ! ’ Four pairs of gun-barrels gleamed in the sun as they swung. Two puffs of smoke leapt into the wind, and twin reports went echoing over the fields.

Feathers spurted from the old birds ; their heads fell backwards, rounded wings fell limp, and the partridges spun headlong into the turnips again. A quick shout : ‘ Hold on ; there’s cheepers ! ’ stopped the shooting, whilst



ten pairs of immature wings beat with tremendous vigour but little speed away beyond the fence.

But little Kallee had gone down to the same shot as the old cock partridge. He stood where he had fallen, completely terrorised, staring fearfully and without understanding at the heap of tattered brown plumage that had been his parent. He himself was badly hurt. A stray pellet had whipped through his tiny wing, striking at the elbow to shatter bone and sinew.

Unable to comprehend disaster, the frightened chick cowered close to the ground, wondering what had gone wrong with his happy world. He cheeped his distress to the unheeding bird beside him, until, with a quick patter of heavy paws, Belle arrived. The retriever opened her jaws, seized the dead bird and vanished.

But the keeper had marked the fall of the 'cheeper'—the name by which a partridge chick is known. Belle was ordered to 'seek dead' again; but Kallee, scared into movement, was now far down the field, running as fast as his legs would bear him, and with his broken wing trailing by his side. He blundered into a rabbit burrow and lost himself in its depths. The retriever sniffed here and there among the turnips, and when she poked her head into the burrow, Bryant, thinking she was after a rabbit, and impatient of delay because of a wounded cheeper, called her off. Then the guns continued their interrupted beat.

At sunset Kallee left his retreat and crept away among the furrows in search of his parents. And that night he heard for the first time the clear, metallic call of old partridges summoning the scattered members of their coveys. 'Chee-rik'—again and again the cry sounded over the fields in the twilight. From here and there the young birds answered: 'Chee-reep, chee-reep.' An old bird lit with

a whirr of wings close to Kallee, and with a glad cheep of welcome the wounded chick ran to greet the bigger bird. But the stranger heard another cry, from a young voice that it knew, and it flew away.

Again and again the solitary youngster hastened toward a calling parent; but the restless birds seldom remained for more than a few moments in one place before flying on again. At length, weary and despondent, Kallee found a little rabbit-scape beside a turnip, and in the little hollow he huddled down, whilst around him and away in the distance the search for missing friends continued, far into the hours of darkness. But the little bird in the rabbit-scape did not hear them. He was asleep.

. . . . .

For three days Kallee continued the vain search for his parents. Then, gradually, his immature mind grasped the fact that henceforward he must fare alone. His injured wing now troubled him little; the pain had gone from it, and the outer half flapped and dangled unheeded as he moved about the field. Deprived of blood, the partially severed tendons withered; and at the end of a fortnight the useless piece dropped off altogether. The primaries were gone, but the coverts remained, and thereafter Kallee fared better.

Shooting was resumed at the end of October. In the interval of 'grace' the cheepers had added to their bulk and strength of pinion, and they were now considered fit to be shot. Kallee heard firing in the stubble one morning, while coveys came hastening to the turnip field that he had never left. Then, in the afternoon, the guns came to the roots.

Kallee crouched motionless when he heard the approach of men and dogs. He saw a pair of gaitered legs stride past

three yards away ; and the beat would have gone on had not the black retriever halted. Then a voice spoke : ' Hold on, sir ; there's something here.' And Sandy McIntosh ordered the retriever to ' seek.' Belle trotted eagerly toward the terrified chick and dipped her muzzle through the leaves.

Completely forgetful of his disabled pinion, Kallee leapt into the air. He beat his wing and a half furiously, and actually flew, skimming the turnip-tops for six yards, before the greater resistance under his whole wing tilted him over and he side-slipped to the ground. Gun-barrels had lifted at sight of Kallee, but he was down under cover again too quickly to permit time for a shot. Moreover, his brief flight had broken the scent-line for the retriever. She found it again, and Kallee repeated his momentary, desperate flight. Running and flying in short, rapid bursts, the chick left Belle far behind, and she lost him completely.

This was the beginning of the best lesson that Kallee ever learnt. He was quick to appreciate that by alternate running and flying he could elude his pursuers. As the season advanced he was flushed repeatedly, and though fired at several times he continued unscathed. Soon he was well known among beaters, keepers, and ' guns ' as an almost impossible shot, and completely elusive so far as dogs were concerned. ' The Runner,' they called him, to distinguish him from his fellows, and the fame of that runner will last for many a year to come.

By the end of winter, Kallee was a full-grown partridge, extremely fast on his feet, bright of plumage, and remarkably alert and clever. He took to roosting like the others, out in the grass fields, but never far from cover, and always sleeping alone. The other partridges shunned the com-

pany of a disabled bird. He was an outcast, lonely, and longing for companionship. Then, when spring came and primroses starred the sunny banks once more, Kallee made his home in the blaeberry scrub of Craigie Wood, a pheasant covert ; then he sought a mate.

Hen partridges came frequently to the ant-hills at the edge of the covert. Here they would pause in their feeding to gaze archly, demurely, or brazenly, as their natures dictated, at the lone cock who came from the blaeberries to greet them. But each in turn lost interest and moved away when they saw his fragmentary wing. For the law of the wild decrees that physical perfection is an essential attribute in those who would carry on the race. Thus the flight of a leaden pellet had cut Kallee adrift from his kin.

When nesting began, the flightless cock was still alone. He wandered disconsolately from field to field ; but here, too, his quest for a mate was in vain. To ease the hurt of loneliness, he sought the companionship of other cocks ; but they were preoccupied with their domestic affairs, and they would not trouble with him. So Kallee returned unhappily to his blaeberry scrub and his ant-hills by the wood. Here, in his fierce hunger for friendship, he tried to strike up an acquaintance with a robin. But the red-breast, like the others, was too intent upon his own affairs to take much notice of Kallee.

One morning four weeks later, while the solitary bird was wandering about the edge of the covert, he saw a pair of partridges with ten chickens approaching to feed at the ant-hills. Kallee stared as though fascinated at the fluffy little creatures running about in the grass. One of them strayed toward him. Instinctively the lonely cock pecked at the sand of an ant-hill, uncovering a score of struggling insects and their pupæ, then he clucked the summons to food.

The chick needed no second invitation. It darted toward Kallee, halting a few inches away with a pert look of enquiry. Kallee pecked the ant-hill again, and the chick ran forward. A moment later it was perched on Kallee's foot busily devouring the titbits he found for it. Two other chicks came to join the first, and Kallee was almost faint with happiness. These trustful little folk cared naught for shattered wings. This strange bird found food for them; that was enough. They gave their friendship wholeheartedly in return.

Presently the parents of the brood drew near. Resentment blazed for a moment within them, but it quickly subsided when they noted the stranger's solicitude for their chicks and his diligence in seeking food for them. With the remainder of their family they joined him in demolishing the ant-hill. Thus Kallee found friends at last, and the ache of loneliness was dulled for the first time since the day when he lost his parents and part of his wing.

When the covey moved away in the evening to sleep in a neighbouring field, Kallee endeavoured to accompany them. But this the other cock would not tolerate. Puffed plumage and a hoarse challenge convinced Kallee that his company was barred at night. So he merely walked with the family to the first fence, and waited there until they had vanished in the blue of twilight.

Each day for a fortnight the friendly covey returned to Craigie Wood; then disaster befell them. At the end of a day of sultry heat and mountainous clouds, they had retired as usual to the centre of a grass park where a score of young bullocks, newly purchased, had that afternoon been turned in to graze. The animals were restless in their new surroundings and had gathered in a bunch at the top of the field when night fell.

Later, the starry patches in the sky became obscured, and the darkness was intense. Redshanks, peewits, and snipe, ill at ease, flew and called unceasingly over a neighbouring marsh, for the birds are weather-wise. Then, at ten minutes past midnight, a scorching burst of violet flame leapt in writhing streamers down the sky. Half a second later a terrific crash of thunder roared deafeningly in the valley, reverberating away to rumble and mutter to silence in the distant hills.

The coming of the rain was instantaneous. It seemed that some great flooded dam had burst to fragments in the sky. The water fell in blinding sheets, drumming down to flatten the grass and rise again like smoke. The bullocks were terror-stricken. Another blast of flame that seemed to set the rain afire began the stampede. Flank to flank, the fear-maddened brutes broke into a gallop, plunging madly down the field to the accompaniment of a mighty roll of thunder.

The parents of the partridge brood were awake, and heard the approach of galloping hoofs. They saw the eyes of the herd gleam in the flare of another flash, then rose in the air in a desperate attempt to head the bullocks off. They were caught in a forest of racing legs and knocked to the ground. The herd plunged on and away, leaving the bodies of the gallant birds pounded and trodden into the turf with those of two of their chicks.

At dawn Kallee was waiting at the edge of Craigie Wood. Four hours later, and yet unfed, he still waited. Then, at midday, he crept under the fence beyond which a score of young bullocks now were grazing quietly. In the middle of the field he found the pitiful remains of two adult partridges and two chickens. For a long time Kallee stood by them, the pain of loneliness, almost forgotten, returning again to his heart.

'Chee-reep.' Kallee started at the sound of a chicken's voice. He looked about and saw the unhappy little creature, damp and disconsolate, crouched in a hoof-print. The little bird ran toward him and wriggled its way beneath him to huddle quietly there. Kallee thrilled to the feel of the confiding little creature. He clucked softly and reassuringly to it in a voice that he had never used before. For when he spoke to that chick he called it his own.

Then Kallee called 'Chee-rik'—the hard metallic cry of an adult partridge. It was the call to his first ingathering. Other chicks arose like magic from the wet grass and ran to join their fellow beneath Kallee, and soon all eight survivors were present. Then the flightless cock took them to Craigie Wood and fed them there, and that night they slept with him in the blaeberry scrub. Thus Kallee adopted the orphaned chicks and found a happiness such as he had never known before.

. . . . .  
As the season advanced and the chicks grew bigger, Kallee left his summer home by the wood and led his family to a field of potatoes. Here they found a wider range of foodstuffs, and Kallee taught them how to discriminate between those things that were edible and those that were not. Here, too, they were introduced to a deadly enemy, when a stoat endeavoured to stalk them down a furrow.

At Kallee's warning cluck every chick crouched and looked around in search of danger. They saw the white-fronted hunter threading his sinuous way through the potato-stems; then Kallee uttered a quick cry and rose in the air. His wing and a half bore him as usual for a few yards, then he dropped to earth and ran. The chicks rose with him and landed with him. Flying and running alternately, the covey sped away in a wide half-circle,

leaving a broken trail that no stoat on earth could piece together.

As the stoat continued to haunt the field day after day, the chicks quickly learnt that swift running punctuated by short bursts of flight could shake off any pursuit on the ground. Thus they adopted their guardian's methods and avoided danger. Then the 1st of September came round again, and another partridge-shooting season began.

Kallee and the youngsters were sun-bathing in the stubble that morning when they heard the sound of shots fired in the distance. The chicks crouched immobile and looked with startled eyes at Kallee. Grim memories of other days arose in the mind of the older bird. He knew that the greatest menace that ever confronted his kind was striding once more through the fields; and in times of trouble cover was essential to the flightless bird.

He clucked a summons and went with his covey deep into the potato field, listening to the sound of the guns. At each shot Kallee's body twitched as though that pellet of old were finding its mark again. Then, singly and in pairs, other partridges came whirring into the potatoes.

At midday shooting ceased for an hour, then the party came to the roots. Eight men—the keeper, three beaters, and four 'guns,' strung out in a line to walk across the furrows. Every now and then there came a sharp cackle of alarm, the whirr of wings and the stunning reports of the guns. And at the third beat, Kallee knew that the men were advancing directly toward him. He crouched, waiting, while the young birds clustered round him, watching him intently, awaiting the signal that would bid them rise and go.

The noise of tramping feet drew nearer. Kallee gathered his legs below him, eased out his wing and a half and looked



anxiously at his trusting young followers—a look that plainly said : ‘ If ill befalls, farewell, little friends.’ Then Kallee saw boots in the furrows. He uttered a quick command : ‘ A moment wait, then go.’ And with a loud whirr of his whole wing Kallee burst up through the leaves and away.

‘ Mark !’ The keeper’s voice barked the warning. Four guns leapt up. But the word had hardly been spoken when Kallee spun over on his side and dropped like a stone from sight in the leaves. The guns were lowered, just as there came a chorus of hard little cackles and the chicks whirred up from cover. ‘ Mark !’ Again the guns lifted and swung. But like a shower of brown divots the eight youngsters plunged out of sight and ran for all they were worth before a shot could be fired.

The men turned to stare at each other in consternation. Bryant looked sharply at the keeper. ‘ Remember that first bird, McIntosh ?’ he asked.

‘ Aye ; I do that, sir,’ replied the keeper. ‘ Yon was The Runner.’

‘ Yes,’ commented Bryant ; ‘ and you saw the others of the covey imitating his tricks. How do you account for it ?’

‘ He adopted the chickens belangin’ tae a pair o’ auld birds that were killed by some stirks,’ replied the keeper.

There was an icy edge to Bryant’s voice when he spoke again : ‘ Well, you see the result now : a covey that runs like damned rabbits ! If you’d had any foresight you would have shot that infernal bird in the summer.’

Sandy McIntosh looked oddly at the other man, then he said : ‘ Mr. Blair wouldna hae allowed that, sir. And in any case we didna expect anything like this.’

Bryant growled something unintelligible, and sharply ordered that the beat be continued. Before the guns left

the field, members of Kallee's covey had been flushed on six occasions. Four swift shots were fired at them, but no one could be certain whether they were hit, as they dived hurriedly back into cover.

At sunset that night, Kallee perched on a boulder at the edge of the field, and his summoning cry : ' Chee-rik,' sounded across the furrows. Other adult birds cried to their scattered families. Many chicks failed to arrive, and many there were who listened in vain for the voice of parents. But in twenty minutes Kallee had mustered eight unharmed youngsters from the furrows, and he took them to roost in the stubble.

When Sandy McIntosh reported the incident concerning Kallee and his covey, old John Blair was intensely interested. ' A most remarkable thing,' he said ; ' a most remarkable thing.' And he asked the keeper to keep him informed of further developments.

Every other day for the next four weeks, the guns returned to the roots. But at the end of that dreadful month eight birds still came to Kallee's ingathering. News of The Runner and his equally elusive orphans spread far and wide, until they became the subject of discussion and argument wherever shooting men forgathered in the county. Old John Blair especially was jubilant. He never tired of talking about The Runner to his friends. His pride in the bird's remarkable achievements was boundless. He sometimes walked about the roots on Sundays in the hope of seeing the partridge for himself.

But Bryant took a different view of the matter. He conceived a vicious and utterly puerile dislike for Kallee. He resolved that if he could not shoot him and his covey in the air, he would shoot them on the ground. The man became quite obsessed with the idea ; and though John

Blair condemned the decision as thoroughly unsportsmanlike, and said so in withering terms, the birds were Bryant's till the end of the season, and he could please himself.

But for a brief period in October, when the pheasant-shooting opened, the partridges enjoyed respite. However, in November interest in them was renewed, and life for Kallee became uncertain again. When the potatoes were lifted he took his covey to a raspberry field half a mile away. Here the difficulty was not to kill them, but to see them at all in the drills. Yet Bryant was convinced that he could account for them there ; and when a big party gathered for an extensive shoot on New Year's Day, he issued orders that the raspberry field was to be thoroughly beaten out and that The Runner and his covey were to be killed either off the ground or on it.

Twelve shots were fired that afternoon in the berry field, and four men claimed to have bagged a member of the famous covey. But Sandy McIntosh saw Kallee next day and counted the birds that were with him. And he counted eight. John Blair received the information with relief and delight. He sent a message to Bryant in which he said that it gave him great satisfaction to announce that The Runner's covey was still intact.

This seemed to nettle Bryant still further, and he continued with grim determination in his efforts to exterminate that redoubtable band of birds. But as January drew toward its close, and still no casualty had been inflicted, the prospect of success became increasingly remote. Then, when only four days of the shooting season remained, Bryant decided to change his tactics. He told the keeper to find out where the covey slept at nights. Wondering, but with no idea of what Bryant had in mind, Sandy McIntosh spent the next three evenings with binoculars in the vicinity of the raspberry

field. And on the third night he saw Kallee emerge from the drills and creep with his eight companions past the top of Redstone Quarry, over a wall, then out across another field. On the crest of a low hummock they halted, and they had not moved when darkness fell.

Next day—it was the 1st of February, the last day for partridge-shooting—the keeper told Byrant of his discovery, and took him to see the place. The field was roughly eight acres in extent, square, and with drystone walls all round it. Bryant expressed his satisfaction and outlined his plan to the dumbfounded keeper. Eight guns would be required to ensure the success of the plan, he said ; he himself at such short notice could bring but five, including himself. And he told the keeper to arrange for another two guns to be present, which, with the keeper's own, would give the required number.

Late that morning, Sandy McIntosh called on me to ask if I would assist in wiping out The Runner and his covey. I refused flatly ; but the keeper insisted, saying that there would probably be no need for me to fire a shot. I thought this over. If I did not go, then someone else would, and the birds would be killed just the same. And I knew Kallee so well, had spent many days watching him when he was a chick, and later on when he adopted the orphan family. If this was to be the end of my old acquaintance—yes, I would like to see him once again before he died.

‘Very well,’ I said ; ‘I’ll come.’

The keeper's expression of relief betrayed the fact that he himself heartily disliked the unsavoury business, and was glad to know that I shared his views. I asked him what Mr. Blair thought about it. He said :

‘When I told him about it, he looked at me queer-like an’ asked if I thought the birds would get awa’. I said

they hadna a ghost o' a chance. Mr. Blair didna say onything for a meenit, but just stared oot the window. Syne he said : " All right, Sandy," an' I cam' awa'. The auld man thinks a mighty lot o' The Runner, ye ken.'

Presently the keeper left me and called on old Angus McWhirter, the doctor, in whose company I had frequently shot over Balbracken in the old days. I later learnt that the fiery medico called the keeper every kind of a fool for showing Bryant where The Runner spent the nights. He also said that ' he damned well wasn't going to help to murder sleeping birds.' But when he heard that I was to be there, he described me in very offensive terms, and promised to come as well—but with an empty gun.

A fine snow was falling when, toward evening, I took my gun and started off for the appointed meeting-place. I met Sandy McIntosh at the end of the narrow old road with its hedges of tangled bramble and brier bushes leading into the old sandstone quarry. We walked into the quarry and sought shelter in a little disused shack where a rusted stove and corroded tools lay among the decaying weeds.

It was fiercely cold, so we started a fire in the stove with some twigs and a pick-handle. Then the doctor arrived ; and a minute later Bryant and four other men came in and were introduced. Bryant outlined to us the plan of action we already knew. With a stick he drew a square on the earth of the floor to represent the field where the partridges roosted. Its nearest corner was about fifty yards from the quarry. He then explained that the party was to scatter round the walls, one man to halt at each of the four corners, and the other four men to occupy midway positions between them. Then at a signal all were to cross the wall and converge on the covey in the centre. The birds would probably scatter in all directions, and to avoid accidents no shots

were to be fired till they had run outside the circle of men.

For its purpose the plan was perfectly conceived. It seemed impossible that any bird, especially a runner, could escape alive. 'Poor old Kallee,' I thought; 'this looks like your end.'

At this point the keeper—who had been away on the look out—returned and spoke to Bryant. 'The birds are awa' ower tae the middle o' the field,' he said.

'Right,' said Bryant, taking his gun from a corner; 'come on.' And he led the way out of the quarry.

We managed to crawl unseen to the nearest corner of the field. This was to be my position—arranged by the keeper—a crafty arrangement as things turned out. Now the others stole away. Bryant occupied the midway position up to my left, and the doctor was next on my right.

For ten minutes I crouched in the snow with all feeling frozen out of my feet. Then, dimly in the failing light, I saw the keeper leap over the wall at the farthest corner. This was the signal for action, and we all crossed the wall. As I stepped over the grass I looked intently toward the centre of the field. There I saw Kallee. He stood upright, gazing about; but the other birds were not in view, though I knew they were crouched beside him.

We all carried our guns in the crooks of our arms, as the partridges were not expected to move until we were almost upon them. But we had misjudged the wary leader of the covey. He must have recognised deadly peril at once. Before we were a dozen paces from the wall, there came a chattering cry from Kallee, and he was on the wing. The others rose with him, but as usual the one-winged bird pitched down to the snow six yards from the point he had left.

The others swung down to land with him, but he uttered another cry. The chicks hesitated before their feet touched

the ground. Kallee cried yet again. There was a violent whirr of wings, and the young birds, rising rapidly, strung out and came flying toward me at a tremendous pace. There was little time to think, yet the thought flashed into my mind that the old bird knew that there was only one way out for his family, and that was in sustained flight. They were flying to his orders, leaving him behind.

It occurred to me, also, that the keeper knew that the partridges would return to the berry field in a straight line over my corner. But the covey was now shooting overhead. I flung up my gun and fired both barrels—and all the birds flew on. Then I heard Bryant shout: ‘Look out; The Runner’s coming to you!’

Bryant was hurrying toward me with all his might, whilst flying and running Kallee came swiftly in my direction. He passed close to me and away toward the quarry. Bryant was still seventy yards away. But he halted and raised his gun. I knew that he was an excellent shot, but I doubted whether he could see Kallee in that dim light, let alone hit him.

Then I saw a dull red flash wink from his gun, and feathers spurt from the running bird. Despite my anger I could not help admiring such an extraordinary shot. Then Bryant fired again. Kallee was knocked spinning, but he got up and ran once more—with his good wing trailing, for at least one pellet had hit him hard.

It was not until Bryant approached that I understood he was unaware of hitting Kallee. ‘Damn it,’ he snarled; ‘the whole lot’s got away again!’ I was about to say that Kallee was wounded, but I hadn’t time to speak. Bryant glared at me and asked: ‘Why the devil did *you* come here at all? You didn’t try to hit these birds. Your gun was pointing yards behind them!’

A voice at my back addressed the accusing figure : ' If he had tried to kill them, Bryant, I would have shot him ! ' I turned in time to catch a wink from the doctor.

This murderous talk startled Bryant momentarily, but he soon recovered his composure. Summoning his friends and the keeper, he strode off to where his car had been left on the old road. Presently we heard him drive off. Dr. McWhirter had his car there as well. I hurried him toward it and asked him to cover the half-mile to my home as fast as he could.

Twenty minutes later, I was back at the quarry with Roy, my own spaniel. Snow was still falling, and it was now almost completely dark. I took Roy to the place where last I had seen Kallee. The scent must have been weak and cold, if it existed at all. But Roy has the best nose of any dog I know, and we found Kallee in the bushes by the old quarry road.

He tried feebly to struggle away through the undergrowth, but got tangled up in a coil of fence-wire, and there I picked him up. He was pretty far gone and I felt sure that he could not last long. For a moment I held him, wondering what to do. Then a spark falling from the stove caught my eye, and I walked toward the hut.

I put Kallee in my cap and laid him before the stove, then sat down on an upturned pail. Roy settled beside me and we looked at the partridge. His eyes were closed ; I knew that he was dying. For a minute or two we sat, then the heat seemed to restore Kallee a little. His eyes opened again. He stared toward the fire, and although it should have frightened him, he did not move. Perhaps he was not seeing it at all.

Presently he stood up, lurched, then recovered again, and I saw that one of his feet was almost shot away, yet he



showed no sign of feeling pain. Next moment both Roy and I started involuntarily when Kallee suddenly opened his bill and cried 'Chee-rik.' I stared at the bird in amazement. Despite his terrible injuries, he was sounding the call to another ingathering.

Even Roy seemed to sense the tragedy of that moment. He looked up at me with puzzled, questioning eyes. Then Kallee called again, and his cry was followed by a distant 'Chee-reep,' as one of the covey answered from the berry field. I do not think Kallee heard the reply, but he steadied himself and hopped slowly on his poor, broken foot, out of my cap and away through the door.

I heard him cry again and saw one of the young birds come from the brambles and run to him. Another followed, then another, and presently all eight were there. And together Kallee and his family passed out of sight in the darkness. I waited ten minutes, then motioned to Roy, and we went home under a clearing sky where stars were coming out.

With old John Blair I returned to Redstone Quarry in the morning. Roy trotted at my heels, and I told him to search in the brambles by the old road. He found Kallee just beyond the hedge, and Kallee was dead. A line of footprints leading away over the snow told us the route the covey had taken when they left their leader. They would know that he was dead, and they would not return to him again. But they took with them a heritage of wariness and intelligence that would ensure their safety for many a day to come. And if partridges have memories, they would never forget Kallee.

I picked up the brown bird and handed him to my companion. John Blair did not speak immediately, but gently

spread the little bit of wing on Kallee's left side. Then he looked at the newly broken wing and the shattered foot, and he shook his head. He whispered something, but I could not tell what it was that he said. Then he spoke to me : ' You knew this bird best, I think ? '

' Yes,' I replied ; ' I've known and watched him since his cheeper days.'

' Well, we'll go home, now,' continued the old man ; ' and as we go I would like you to tell me all that you know about him.'

A month later, the keeper called at my house and told me that his employer would like to see me. Old John met me at his door with a warm handshake. He told me as we went into the house that he had terminated Bryant's tenancy of the shooting ; and I was glad to hear of it. I was led into the library, and here Mr. Blair pointed to an exquisite little painting that hung above the fireplace.

' How do you like it ? ' he said ; and he mentioned the name of a noted artist.

I walked across the room and looked at the picture. It was of a partridge, and I recognised Kallee. He stood on a little snow-covered knoll at sunset in an attitude of watchfulness, whilst around him crouched eight other younger birds—birds of the year. I read the title and the inscription below :

#### THE RUNNER.

' He had lost a wing ; but he was the only partridge on Balbracken Estate ever known to take a covey through a shooting-season without the loss of a single bird.'

I felt a thrill of pride when I remembered my acquaintance with Kallee. And it was there beside his picture that I

silently swore my vow that, when the coveys rise before me in root or stubble field hereafter, I will keep my weapon at 'trail' and let the brown birds go. And I was very happy to think that I was able to help a little in the quarry hut on that last snowy night, when Kallee heard the call to his last ingathering.

TO JOHN DONNE.

*High over Hades soared a golden bird,  
And all the shadows heard  
A clarion voice,  
That cried, ' Rejoice,  
For Death is dead !'  
And not one shadow stirred.*

*Stiff as black candles Pluto and his wife  
Sat listening for the rife  
Leaf-rustle of feet,  
Tongue, or heart-beat,  
And froze with dread ;  
For Death to ghosts is Life.*

C. E. B. SILK.

## OLD MICHAEL AND HIS FAMILY.

BY PAMELA HINKSON.

WHEN one enters the garden, to find Old Michael perched high and perilously on his ladder against the wall, or half-hidden among the branches of the apple trees, pruning, one knows that spring has come. It is the approach of full summer when one finds him on a May evening, bent double absolutely—as he is almost bent already, by the rheumatism—putting out bedding plants, in absolutely straight rows.

All Old Michael's gardening is done in absolutely straight rows. Ribbon borders are his delight. And, since he has ruled the garden for nearly fifty years, his sovereignty unquestioned, nothing wanders in it from his order of regularity.

For a very brief time he retired on pension, being eighty or thereabouts and having surely earned his leisure. And the owner of the garden—the nominal owner—who had never wielded her sovereignty in twenty years or so that it had been hers in name—had dreams of borders of her own making. Such borders as grow joyously in Irish gardens, with their rich soil and the kind soft air over them, the frequent rains and a benediction of sunlight between—hardly ever a period of steady burning sun to leave the garden dry and arid.

She had thought of borders such as she had known in childhood. (In memories of such gardens it is always childhood.) Tossed beauty of colour, melting one into the other above the head of a child who walked the path between

them. Blue lupins, iris, cloudy white spiræa, pink and scarlet poppies, later delphiniums, red and pink rose-scented peonies. In their turn, phlox, with their haunting smell, that for one garden lover, more than any other smell in the world, can take her back to childhood and an Irish garden in full summer. Pink and purple those phlox were, and the smell of them sweet and a little musty. When they were picked for great jars about the house, they had the smell that an Irish country house has, a dim, sweet mustiness. It is the smell of many years of wood and turf fires, of the dampness of old walls and old wood in them being dried by those fires. It has the haunting magic and association of another smell—that of haymaking and hay drying. A sweet security showed in the kind faces of the phlox growing in that garden of childhood's memory, the same sweet security that was in the nursery which smelt of them. Strengthened by that safe and peaceful background, the golden rod and red-hot pokers in late August and early September, were as brave as the courage that was made in such nurseries.

There had been an old gardener in that garden too. He had made the garden and kept the garden for so long, that he had come to be the Spirit of it, a tiny little man like a bird, immortally old he had seemed to a child's eyes, and he was surely more spirit than body. He had really retired and only returned now and again as a visitor, the gentlest and most welcome revenant, to walk through the garden that had once been his, remembering how it had failed him on occasion, being too cold and wet for the strawberries that grew so well over there at the Castle for his rival gardener. 'That was a kind garden, a warm kind garden.'

But Hyland would look at his own, which lay too low certainly (it had always in it the sound of the river running

outside the walls, and over those walls the sun poured at evening in a golden flood) and in the old face and his troubled eyes, there would show the deeper feeling that we give to things or people whom we love and who hurt us ; and whom we love only the more for that, having paid a price for their possession which makes them infinitely and unforgettably precious. The gardener over there at the Castle with his garden lying high and open to the sun, had never felt more for his warm kind earth, than Hyland felt for the cold corner of his where the shadows lay.

Old Michael, since the rheumatism got him, seems to have been twisted into something the shape of his own apple trees, as though in spirit he were akin to them. Perched in that perilous fashion among their branches to prune them, he is in the world of the trees. They must know his touch and understand even the knife he brings them for their good.

For—his retirement was so brief that we have forgotten it. It does not seem that there was ever a moment when the garden was ours, to walk through it if we chose, with a well-behaved dog at our heels, not fearing at any corner to come upon the little twisted figure, limping along the path with resentment in every line of it, to hear his voice directed apparently into the air, but with a deadly certainty in its aim : ‘ I am greatly troubled indeed by them dogs.’

Or—if someone—the garden boy, who will be very very wise and patient after he has worked under Old Michael for some years and may become perhaps in time another gardener of Old Michael’s kind—should have taken a spade and not brought it back. From his ladder on the wall, or the old kitchen chair which he sometimes uses instead, Old Michael will turn, a little ball of fury, his eyes bright, his face scarlet.

‘ There’s no keeping anything with them at all. Sure they take everything and lave you nothing.’

Now he is eighty-four and one wonders, have they a garden ready for him in Heaven? With, surely, a guard of angels to stand about it with flaming swords.

He was eighty or thereabouts when he retired on pension, not to be a gentleman of leisure, but merely to transfer his activities from the garden to the small farm that he and his son own between them and where everything had been going wrong surely without him.

At seventeen Michael started his service to the family he was afterwards to rule. Sixty-three years of work is a long time. For a portion of them, ever since he attained the position of 'Old Michael' with all the dignity and privileges that go with that Irish title, he has taken a month off during the dapping season, to go fishing. For the month of May, whenever you look towards the lake, you will see the black shape of his boat against the water and the two still figures of fishermen in it—Old Michael, and his youngest son who lost a leg in the War, and has leisure, on his pension, to be a fisherman. Once it was one figure when Old Michael went alone.

There is little about fishing or about the ways of the lake that Old Michael does not know. He taught the sons of the house some of it, laying aside, for the bond of that occupation, the established antagonism of the gardener against them and their kind. Boys and gardeners are natural enemies and Old Michael carries this war further even than most of his kind. Boys and dogs. There is no place for them in gardens. (Although Old Michael loves his own dog only second perhaps to his garden, and has threatened to shoot anyone that would be laying a hand on him.) Once in the hey-day of his strength and vigour he was offered help in the garden, beyond that given by the amenable garden boy of that day who obeyed his orders meekly and smiled at

him behind his back. He had made his own tool of that garden boy, but the proffered help came from a little distance, and he had all the Irish suspicion of a stranger and a foreigner from the next county or village. 'I wouldn't like to see one of Them coming into it at all,' he said. And no light for a child listening ever broke the darkness to reveal what would be happening if one of Them should be coming into it.

The war went on for many years against the sons of the house and against the dogs, who would slip through the gate at their mistress's heels in the wonderful way of dogs who are not wanted and are quite insensitive about it—flattening and elongating themselves with such skill that it seemed no gate ever made could keep them out. But Michael is the last stronghold of chivalry and the one daughter had special privileges and exemptions, even though she broke Michael's heart gathering her flowers and being obliged to walk on his newly raked beds in order to do so. Michael carried that broken heart gallantly, following with his rake only after Miss Patricia had left the garden and her long slender footprints behind her. So her brothers employed her and her feminine wiles disgracefully in the distraction of the gardener. While she won his devotion by admiring his flowers and listening to his talk of the 'treatment' they should receive, the boys were having their own way with the strawberry beds or among the raspberries.

They had another ally then in Michael's brother, the carpenter, known as 'Jack the Gunner,' because of his service in the artillery. Jack the Gunner was and is two years older than Michael, and in spite of his military title as gentle as Michael is fierce. To the carpenter's shop in the yard the boys would go for many delights, to get things made or mended, to hear tales of campaigning under Kitchener in



Egypt, and to be warned of Michael the gardener's movements. Jack the Gunner now lives too in retirement on his own farm across the bog. He has a son who is 'John the Gunner' to the country people, indicating him. Another son a priest, who is 'Father Tim the Gunner' and, appropriately, a Missionary in Africa.

Old Michael's retirement began to end the day that the son of the house—now thirty and ruling the estate, but still a troublesome boy to Michael's eyes—took on himself the job of clipping the laurels beside the gate. He had one side clipped and went down to start the other, to find Michael there before him, up on a kitchen chair, his shears in his hand.

'That's a terrible bad hand you made of the laurels, Mr. Denis!' he remarked, and Mr. Denis was wise enough to leave him to his clipping. A little later he asked Michael's help about growing tomatoes and the old man reappeared then in the garden and remained there.

Now and again, of course, the rheumatism incapacitates him and he must take a day off. Or he is laid up with a chill as he was last winter, when he sat before the fire with an old khaki scarf of his soldier son's tied round his head, his spectacles on his nose, reading a little and being very cross and bored. Asked how he was: 'Indeed he was only poorly,' and nothing annoyed him more than to be told that he was better or appeared so. Indeed then he didn't feel it. He was laid up through the time when they should be planting 'the pays and banes,' and this kept him awake at night and in agony by day. 'I told Mr. Denis to get this and that, but sure he'll never think of it.' He got the peas and beans himself at last and prepared them, drew a chart on each packet as to how they were to be planted, gave an obedient messenger minute instructions as to the

depth and the width apart, these instructions to be passed on to the garden boy. A little fine earth was to be spread on top finally, he directed, turning his old face to me, to see if I really understood. 'And mind you !' With the tone of a General giving final instructions before a vital battle. 'No raking !'

He has a little brown donkey, very like himself, as human beings and animals become who are in constant and close companionship, and drives about behind him now that it is a weariness to walk. They follow the Hunt together, these two, when it is in the neighbourhood, going with their small rattling cart over the most surprising country, finding a gate or gap somewhere to get through. On working days the little brown donkey stands on three legs outside the garden gate, with his cart behind him, dreaming patiently for hours while he waits to carry the Gardener home. Then on Sunday, brushed and groomed, both of them, Michael most distinguished in his Sunday clothes, his low collar and tie and stiff white shirt front and the funny little black hat he wears on Sundays and formal occasions, they take the road to Mass an hour before anyone else. Michael has a conviction, established for himself and irremovable, that if he is not the first of the congregation to enter the church, he is late.

There is something royal about this rule of precedence from which there is no variation ever in Michael's Sundays. Other people may straggle up the village street and into the church as they like. But he must be there first and enter alone. What far-off tradition has moved him to this unconscious gesture ? 'Old Michael' is a proud Irish title—one not to be bought by money or even by years, for there will never again be an 'Old Michael,' at Golden Wood, when his dignity lies buried with him. It is in keeping with

the title, to which one suspects the bearer of this has a right of connection.

There is a Prince of his name whose territorial description is, 'of the Glens.' Whatever happened to this branch of the family in Ireland's troubled history, which brought many great families from Castle to Cabin, and set many adventurers high in their places, there is no question about the breeding.

Michael's eldest son—who has taken the place that was once his as steward—tall and gentle, with a voice of strange wistful sweetness, looks like one of the Apostles—after the Tongues of Fire had descended. He is 'Young Michael' although he is a grandfather, and he will be Young Michael to the end of his days when Old Michael has taken his title to Heaven with him.

Yesterday, driving in pouring summer rain, we picked up on the road a little barefoot figure, wrapped otherwise from head to ankles in oilskins, on his way to the post two miles away. He was going for the pension for Grandfather and for the War pension that makes Uncle Tom a man of means. This trusted messenger and carrier of riches, turned a rose and white rain-soaked face to us, as he expressed his thanks, as like an angel's as any I have seen. In the village shop I left a few pennies on the counter and him to his choice of sweets. He spent the pennies on a bag of biscuits, which he produced as he sat in the back of the car going home and offered to us in front, with perfect ease and hospitality. When I had taken one: 'Take more, miss,' he said, kindly and encouragingly.

'Young Michael's' sister, married to a farm labourer—the family are scattered about still on the estate in this patriarchal manner—has a beauty and distinction as she moves across the yard, having come to the dairy for her

milk, which some duchesses might envy. It is not a peasant beauty, but something rare and unusual, not the prettiness of a young face that passes with age. This has survived the hardness of years of life on a pound a week, with six children. It is a delicacy of feature and of the thoughts within, that bring each year only an increase. I have seen such beauty in ladies of fine and true aristocracy. A Princess of the Glens, perhaps . . .

Then there is Tom, the wild lad of the family, whose innocent wildness made him the accomplice of the sons of the house in many a raid on apples and other fruit when his father's back was turned ; and sent him, in due course, to the War and a different form of raiding, during which he must have remembered sometimes a boy's apple stealing on Irish autumn evenings. Praying for a mist to hide men from Death, he must surely have remembered those other mists that slipped up from the lake and hid a boy's flight from pursuit and all but his laughter as he dropped over the garden wall into safety. He joined the oldest and most famous of Irish regiments—now disbanded and its Colours, dusty with half-forgotten dreams, hanging in St. George's Chapel at Windsor—which had its depot and its recruiting ground in this country. An appreciation of the regiment will bring a light to Tom's lean face, which has something of eternal youth in it. (He will be, in spirit, ' Young Tom ' to the end of his days.)

' It was a grand regiment.'

' I thought so, anyway,' he says, leaning on his crutches. He gave one leg for that regiment.

He limps these days, as brave as a bird, about the place on his two crutches, with which he can do more than many men with two whole legs. He rides a bicycle, taking his crutches with him, strapped on to the long bar. His face,

from long days on the lake, is deeply sunburnt under the wide caubeen which he has twisted into a shape of his own, pointed in front and at the back, like an Admiral's hat. His eyes in the sunburn are a deeper blue than any of his family's—as though he had seen a gleam and caught it into his vision for ever. So he stood recently in the front row of a little group collected outside the church door by a Sunday Election speaker, leaning on his crutches, his face lifted to the man shouting from the car above, listening.

The speaker talked of the next War, as one who knows nothing of such things, using the threat lightly as an election argument, talking to the people of their food supply in such a case, as though in no other way could it affect them. Tom, who had seen War, leaning on his crutches listening, said nothing at all and one wondered what he was thinking.

His tall lean body (which has many wounds in it besides the one that took away his leg), hopping now where it once strode, is as familiar a sight about the lake's edge as it was in the days when he took on the education of the young sons of the house from his father, teaching them all that he knew about fishing. And about the bird life of the lake and the country around. How the duck would come in at evening to their feeding grounds in the barley-fields or on the marshes. How to find a nest that they would have made on the edge of a drain. You'd be guided to that by the smell of it blown suddenly in your face. When you might hear—lying in bed some bright October morning—the first cry of the Wild Geese coming back from the Northern lands, a gaggle-gaggle as they flew again under the Irish sky. And that evening, with the frost sharpening everything into beauty, you'd slip down to Long Island to find them darkening that rocky promontory that stretches out into the water, one or two a little apart, the sentinels, looking up and down,

behind and before, to give warning of the approach of danger.

How the snipe would be out on the Red Bog these days, after nights of full moon to light their feeding. And, with the wind coming from the Atlantic, Tom knew all about the flight of birds in it; how they would zig-zag at first, finding their way, and if you were to walk them down wind they would get the wind of you. But as they turned nose into the wind as they liked best to fly, you'd get a second shot at them as they went over, high.

Much of his country wisdom learnt from birds and beasts and from the air and wind, Tom must have taken to the War, as the eldest son of the house took what he had learned. He was to remember, watching an aeroplane fly before a hundred guns turned on it, the small dark snipe tossed here and there by the wind against an Irish winter sky. When he flew himself over the German lines, every gun, every eye below him an enemy, he came to a fellow feeling and sympathy for the birds. And making his first landing, head straight into the wind, he remembered many things that he and Tom had learned about the wind together, before they could have imagined how they should use such knowledge.

Tom has a touch and way with animals such as his father has with plants and trees. A fish, a shot rabbit, may cease their agonised leaping to lie quietly in his hands, dying. His fingers are strong and gentle and amazingly deft. He can mend or make anything. I have come upon him on a May evening, busy with his boat drawn up on the shore above the little inlet that serves as harbour. Unaware of anyone near, I had been saying something to myself, aloud, and, emerging from the trees that edge the lake, was embarrassed to find someone there. But Tom was unaware of me until I spoke. He was sitting—cross-legged he would

have been if he had had two legs to cross—in his boat, hammering at it, doing some repairs. He was talking too and in some world of his own, so that he did not hear or see me come. (And Tom's voice as it called to me yesterday, news of his fishing across the water from his boat to mine, has a strange beautiful sad sweetness, like his brother's.)

But, mending his boat he was not talking to himself. The one-legged man is never lonely. He has a splendid handsome young wife who loves him, and is as tender and patient and wise as a mother when the inevitable darkness of a War mood comes upon him from time to time. He has his dogs and the lake of which he knows every inch, the birds, the fish and the country. He has a donkey and cart and his donkey is the best fed and treated in the neighbourhood. And his boat, which is a living companion too. He talks to his things. And it was to his boat that he was talking that spring evening as I came upon him. When he is out fishing, he talks to his flies.

'Look pretty now,' he says, casting a May-fly on the water.

*THE BANDIT.*

BY FRANCIS STUART.

JULIE's mother let rooms to lodgers in her rather dingy house on Townsend Road. They had had, as long as Julie could remember, a succession of junior teachers from the local school and sometimes an elderly clerk from one of the near-by banks. So that when a red-headed young man who was neither one nor the other came to lodge, Julie was interested in him at once.

Nor was she disappointed. His habits and talk were entirely different from those of any previous lodger. When Julie brought him his breakfast at eleven o'clock (that being the hour when he had asked for it) he would still be in bed in a pair of bright-green pyjamas and there would be a stale smell of tobacco in the room. He was always ready to have Julie stay and talk while he ate. He seemed to have endless leisure and never went out, or even bothered to dress, until late in the afternoon. But then he seldom returned until late at night either. Julie often heard him letting himself in from where she lay awake in the little room over the porch.

From being merely interested in him and amused by his talk and impressed by his indolent, leisurely ways she came to have a sort of hero-worship for him. Julie was seventeen and she had never met anyone like Louis before.

Gradually as they saw more and more of each other he began to confide in her. And while he told her about himself she would sit on the edge of his bed, her hands



clasped round her knees, her eyes shining and her face rapt. The dingy little bed-sitting-room would fade before her and she would see the wild, exciting scenes that he described to her.

For Louis confided in her the nature of his occupation. Not, however, until he had by careful questioning elucidated the fact that she was the sort of girl to whom a 'Big Shot' in the city underworld appeared the height of romance. The sort of 'Big Shot' that Louis finally admitted to being, a smash-and-grab jewel thief, and on occasions a bank hold-up bandit, was to Julie what a Fairy Prince had seemed to her when she was younger. Actually to have such a person for a friend was beyond her wildest dreams.

'Aren't you very rich?' she asked him. It was funny that he was living in her mother's cheap bed-sitting-room, but the ways of such people were naturally mysterious.

'See that?' he asked, kicking a rather battered old suitcase that was on the floor. 'It's half full of bank-notes, but I daren't try and get rid of them yet. Another month or two and then——' He broke off, leaning back in the chair he was lounging in before the gas-fire, and began to hum a gay tune, watching at the same time the effect that this revelation had on Julie. She stared at the very ordinary-looking piece of luggage. She would have loved one glimpse at the treasure, but she thought that to ask him might be presuming too much on his trust. She even tried not to appear too curious. Men like Louis would like a girl to be casual and ready to take things pretty much for granted, she supposed. There was a high standard for her to live up to now.

'That's why I'm a bit short at the moment,' he went on. 'A queer thing, isn't it? Thousands in there, and me having to take buses when I go down-town to meet the boys in the

evenings. Of course, they'd lend me anything I asked them, but I never do.'

Julie nodded. She understood the way a fellow like Louis would feel with those half-legendary characters he referred to as 'the boys.' No doubt they risked their lives, or at least their freedom, for whatever wealth they might have, and that made him more diffident about asking for a loan.

'Anyhow,' Louis told her, 'it's my own fault. I got through my last haul too quickly. Fairly chucked the stuff around. Why, I remember one night . . .' And he was off on one of his stories of wild carousal that held Julie spell-bound.

Of course she lent him her own small savings. He had not wanted to take them at once, but she made him. And as it was only going to be for such a short time and afterwards he'd be able to get her anything she wanted, he consented. Of course he made her promise not to breathe a word to anyone of all he had told her.

As if she would have dreamed of doing so ! Except, that is, to her brother, George. He was three or four years younger than Julie, and she was very proud to be at last in a position where he would have to look up to her. Usually it was the other way round. Now he had to admit that Julie had justified all the airs she gave herself. George used to wait on the landing just to catch a glimpse of the bandit going out in the late afternoons. And when the door of the front room opened and Louis came out in a somewhat worn overcoat and a soft hat slightly on the side of his red head, the boy held his breath. He was always afraid that the man would glance round and see that he was being spied upon. Then, George thought, anything might happen. But he was very careful and only put a fraction of his face round the corner of the wall.

Sometimes Julie went out with Louis. And knowing that her brother was watching she swept down the stairs and out of the door beside Louis with an air that even the critical George could not deny was justified.

They went for bus rides into remote parts of the city. This was part of Louis' 'work.' He was spying out fresh ground. He pointed out to her certain shops and banks that he 'had his eye on.' Sometimes they got off the bus and walked up and down a street several times. Julie, he said, was very useful to him like this ; they didn't attract any attention hanging round certain buildings as he might have done alone. Proud wasn't the name she felt on these trips, and there wasn't anything she wouldn't have done for him. She hadn't any more money to lend him, but when she broached the matter to George he at once opened his money-box and gave her what he had. That night Louis stayed out with 'the boys' very late, and in the morning she found him when she brought his breakfast still dressed with a blanket pulled over him.

About that time he began to talk to her of a bank the other side of the city that they had been past several times on their 'strolls.' It appeared that a big city firm drew money for wages out of it every Friday afternoon. They went out there three Fridays running and saw the man whom the firm sent. They saw him go in to the bank and come out again. He carried a black leather bag. They followed him up the street and round the corner as far as the entrance to the offices of the firm of tyre-manufacturers.

It was a quiet enough street in a suburb given over to factories and warehouses. She thought that a dare-devil bandit like Louis would have an easy enough job in holding the messenger up, taking the bag, and getting away. After some of the exploits he had described to her it would be

child's play. Still, with all the money he had in that suitcase, and which he told her would be safely negotiable very soon now, she didn't see much point in running even this slight risk.

'You see,' Louis told her, 'this would be all one-pound notes probably. Stuff you could get rid of right away. With that I could get to a place where I could unload the big stuff I've got waiting.'

'Listen, Louis. Will you let me come with you on this job? I'd do exactly as you told me. I might even be a help,' she implored him. Julie was not a bad girl. Just a rather silly, romantic girl of seventeen or so who had been to too many films and read too many gangster stories. If Louis had been a detective instead of a daring bandit she would have been all for the law. What she wanted was excitement and adventure, and a hero who did things. Given someone like that she was a loyal little help. It was just bad luck that the first young man she had ever come across who was not completely drab had been Louis.

'Aw, I don't know,' he said. 'A girl would be in the way.'

But she went on begging him.

Days and weeks passed and there was no more talk of pulling off that job. Their outings together became very infrequent, and when Julie questioned him Louis was evasive and said something about lying low for a bit, hinting that the C.I.D. men were keeping a sharp look out for him, having got word that he had returned to the city. All the same, he continued to go out nearly every afternoon and did not return till late at night.

It was George who first began to question if their lodger was all he made himself out to be. He was a little envious of Julie's admiration for him which had before been lavished

on himself. Her brother's growing scepticism, combined with Louis' coolness and neglect, began to have an effect on the girl. Not that she really doubted Louis for a moment. But she wanted to silence her brother's hints, which were getting on her nerves.

'When I see that haul of notes, I'll believe it,' he kept saying.

It was not difficult to get a key that fitted the old suitcase in Louis' room. She got a bunch from a local locksmith, making an excuse of having lost one of her own. Then one afternoon when Louis had gone out and George was out of the way she went into the little bed-sitting-room. She did not want her brother there in case there was a disappointment. She could not have borne his ironic comments. Besides, even if the notes weren't there, it wouldn't prove anything. Louis might easily have removed them to a safer hiding-place. Especially if he had heard the police were looking for him.

She pulled the case out from under the bed. She had not much difficulty in opening it. At first she did not quite understand the significance of what she saw in it. But at any rate there were no bundles of notes, not even a single note. There were, though, about ten or twelve women's handbags, four or five pairs of silk stockings with the price tabs still on, eight or ten children's little hats and berets, two children's overcoats, and certain other odds and ends.

• Gradually Julie understood. A horrible sensation of disgust and despair took hold of her. And then, quickly, came a wave of anger drying up the tears of disillusion that had started to her eyes.

Louis was that lowest of all petty crooks, a woman's bag-snatcher, a robber of children, and (as she now knew from

experience) a petty confidence trickster of boys and girls like herself and her brother.

She banged back the lid, locked it again, and kicked the case back under the bed. Then she sat down on the bed to think. George must never know. She could not have borne that last humiliation. But that was going to be difficult. If she didn't agree to opening the suitcase with him, he would do so on his own one of these days.

She hit on a plan. That messenger who came every Friday afternoon from the bank to the tyre-factory. Of course, Louis had never had the slightest intention of holding him up. All that talk of his, and their spying out the land, had just been staged to impress a silly girl and screw her savings out of her. She saw that, of course. Very well, but *she* would bring off that job herself. Dangerous, it might be. But now she didn't care about that. Her first loyalty had been outraged and she was so miserable that she did not mind much what happened to her. She went over her plan calmly. She thought she could bring it off. If she did she would make it all right about George. That was now her only objective. He must never know the awful thing that had happened to her.

On Friday she waited, strolling up and down the street, until she saw the messenger arrive at the bank. She herself was carrying a suitcase.

As soon as Julie saw the messenger go into the bank she walked on in the direction of the tyre-factory. When she turned the corner into the street where the factory was she saw that it was empty except for a woman who was wheeling a perambulator. She was going away in the opposite direction.

Julie waited with wildly beating heart. If the woman had not got far enough before the messenger turned the

corner on his return or if someone else appeared in the street before he did, then it meant waiting until the following week. How she would be able to keep George from looking into Louis' suitcase for another week she did not know.

She was standing about twenty yards from the corner of the street. The woman with the baby was now far down towards the other end. Julie could not delay any longer. She would have to risk her looking round. She quickly lay down, stretching herself along the pavement, which was luckily dry. She put her suitcase beside her as though it had fallen at her side. She had her head in such a position that she could watch the corner. There was the danger that someone else might appear before the factory messenger.

But Julie had what might be called, perhaps, beginner's luck. In a moment the messenger appeared carrying the little black bag. When he saw her he quickened his step. She had shut her eyes.

She heard his footsteps stop beside her. She felt his hand on her and heard him ask her what was wrong. She opened her eyes, doing her best to look dazed. He was bending over her. He had put down the bag on the pavement.

'It's nothing,' she said in a weak voice. 'I must have fainted.'

She felt rather ashamed of herself at that moment. But she told herself that *he* wouldn't suffer. She was trying limply to get to her feet. He was in front of her with his hands under her arms. And then, crouched as she was, her knees bent, in just the position that she had rehearsed at home, she suddenly butted forward with her hard little head, and catching the messenger full in the solar plexus sent him sprawling backwards on to the pavement.

In a second she had grabbed the black bag in one hand and

her suitcase in the other and in another second was round the corner. A few doors on there was a café which she had already explored. This she dived into and went into the ladies' room. The entrance to this, as she had noted, was close to the street door and she did not think anyone had seen her come in.

Locking herself in, she opened the brown suitcase and from inside it took out a small bright green one. She opened this, took out a raincoat and a hat, changed them for the ones she was wearing, washed all the make-up off her face. She opened the black bag, had one look inside, put the bag in the green suitcase, packed the tweed coat and hat she had been wearing in the brown suitcase, which she concealed as best she could behind a cistern, and then went out again into the street.

There, to her great relief, there appeared to be no sign of excitement. A few people were walking along the pavements. The usual sparse traffic was passing along the roadway. The messenger was no doubt back at the factory reporting the robbery and telephoning to the police. That would be the only thing he could do when he had picked himself up and seen no trace of his assailant.

Julie jumped on a bus and went home.

Louis was out when she got back. She went into his room, opened his suitcase, emptied it of the pitiful evidence of his mean thefts and neatly deposited in their place the bundles of notes from the black bag. She only took from one packet the amount that George had lent Louis. •

She re-locked his suitcase and removed the things she had taken out of it in her own green one. The ladies' handbags and the stockings she burnt in the kitchen range, but she made a parcel of the children's hats and coats, and, disguising her handwriting, addressed them to the police and left the



package tied to some railings in a deserted street in another part of the city.

The next afternoon, the moment Louis had gone out, she brought her brother into his room.

She had the bunch of keys in her hands, and was just about to pull out the suitcase and vindicate herself in her young brother's eyes, have her little moment of restored esteem, when they heard the front door open and the sound of several people on the stairs.

Julie had only time to hide the keys when the door opened and Louis came in, accompanied by two men. At first she thought it was a couple of 'the boys' whom he had met on the doorstep as he was going out. But then she remembered that there probably were no 'boys' at all. That was all part of his boasting lies. A mean and petty bag-snatcher did not belong to any gang. No gang would have accepted him.

It became evident in a moment that the two men with him were detectives. They had been waiting for him in the street. And she saw with shame the contempt with which they treated him, not even bothering to watch him closely.

They nodded to Julie and her brother.

'You know the sort of fellow you've been letting your room to?' one of them asked. 'Well, just a minute and we'll show you.' They didn't even tell them to get out of the room. They apparently wanted to give Louis the shame of exposing his mean violence before these youngsters.

Louis handed one of the detectives a key. He was making no trouble. That riled them too. They knew that the most he could get was a few months, and that was not worrying an old lag like him. He had been in before.

'If I had my way I'd alter the law to get fellows like you

a few years' stretch,' one of the men told him. Louis only smiled. Julie couldn't bear the sight of him standing there shameless and mean and furtive. She didn't know how she had ever been taken in.

But at least she had one great consolation. George would never know.

One of the men opened the suitcase, stared at the neat bundles of notes that she had placed there the day before and started to his feet. All the easy contempt and casualness went out of his manner. He pulled a pair of handcuffs from his pocket and snapped them on Louis' wrists. Louis stared aghast. George stared with bright eyes. The other detective whistled as he examined the notes.

'Look here—look here——' Louis began.

'That's enough, my lad,' the detective who had him by the arm said. 'You're not the kind we were after, it seems, and, though it may be worse for you, I'm blessed if I don't think more of you than I did a moment ago, eh, Charlie?'

'That's right,' his companion said from where he was kneeling over the suitcase. 'This cove's got a nerve all right. I'll say that for him.'

## BALLAD OF THE SHIVERING SAND.

*Forsooth I rode the shivering sand,  
 Myself alone, and none beside.  
 I rode to snatch her to the land,  
 I rode to save Trevarrock's bride.  
 I cast my challenge to the sea,  
 And set the half-held prisoner free.  
 I saw her palfrey slide and sink,  
 I heard her shriek of agony.  
 Trevarrock, trembling on the brink,  
 Hurled frantic pleadings to the sky.  
 I cursed him for a whimpering hound,  
 And spurred my charger to the bound.  
 I caught Morivena as I passed  
 And dragged her to my saddlebow.  
 The breakers, ominous and vast,  
 Stormed at us in an angry row.  
 My very crest was dashed with foam,  
 But yet I bore her safely home.  
 I heeded not the bridegroom's cries,  
 I care not for his threatenings vain,  
 I hold and keep my lovely prize,  
 Won on that awful battle plain ;  
 When earth and sea conspired to slay,  
 And love and daring gained the day.*

DORA L. BECK.

[The author, aged 78 and totally blind, died a few days after the above had been accepted for publication.]

## ECHOES OF 'HIPPOLYTUS.'

BY JAMES FERGUSSON.

THE *Hippolytus* of Euripides is one of the few plays which, however often re-read, retains for me the same perpetual novelty, the same ineluctable magic, as the greatest plays of Shakespeare. By its maintenance also of a kind of atmosphere of open air, from the dewy freshness of the hunting-scene at the beginning to the background of desolate beach and ocean at the end, it stands apart in my recollection from any other Greek play I have read.

I am not a fluent reader of Greek : my familiarity with *Hippolytus* was won slowly, at the cost of many re-readings and much use of a lexicon ; but the labour was sweet and the reward generous. Perhaps this gradual excavation of the verbal beauty of the play from the covering of an unfamiliar language accounts in part for the hold it has upon my mind ; but other influences drew me to it long before I had read more than a few lines of the Greek text.

Some years ago, when I was an undergraduate at Oxford, good fortune drew me into a company of enthusiasts who spent the first fortnight of each long vacation in travelling through country districts of England giving performances of Greek plays (in English) in such open-air settings as seemed worthy of the representation. A fourth or fifth generation of the same college still carries on this annual festival of combined travel and drama, but their route nowadays is chosen with more consideration of the box office than was shown by my companions. We planned our stages with a romantic and sometimes unpractical eye ;

and bad weather, or the apathy or even lack of an audience, occasionally turned a performance into a fiasco. Such misfortunes, however, did no more than intensify our relish of the bizarre adventures of our journeys and our enjoyment of the successful performances. (To our audiences' enjoyment most of us, I fear, gave little thought.) On each tour there was a feeling of adventure, a careless acceptance of the incalculable fortunes of our journey's next stage, a complete absence of staleness or monotony, which miraculously not only lasted to the end of each year's tour but revived twelve months later to glorify its successor. We enjoyed, as one of my companions has since written, 'many things worth having—summer weather, English country, good company, great poetry, acting, wandering, and a new experience every day.'

My active connection with this irresponsible band of players ended with the tour during which we gave *Hippolytus*, which moreover was the last fortnight of my undergraduate connection with Oxford, so that I clung to each moment of it as to a part of my life which was about to vanish. Many events of that happy fortnight I remember like yesterday; and one of them, a fleeting episode of the performance given on a grey, chilly evening in the ancient fortress of Old Sarum, was the first of three indelible impressions which *Hippolytus* has made on my mind. They were more than impressions. They were deep emotional experiences: three mental adventures which each in turn gave me a sense of being momentarily in intimate touch with the spirit which created the play.

My part in *Hippolytus* was that of the Messenger, whose long speech tells in incomparably vivid narrative the story of Hippolytus's departure under the unjust curse of his father Theseus, the bolting of his horses, and the fearful catastrophe

which wounded him to his death. I took my part very seriously, and its delivery used to fill me at every performance with an almost unbearable intensity of emotion. This may have been increased by the fact that Hippolytus was played by the closest friend of my Oxford days ; there must, I think, have been occasions when I unconsciously identified the protagonist of the play with the actor, and felt a personal and actual grief for Hippolytus's death. As a natural consequence I generally overdid the acting of my part ; but the speech itself, perhaps the greatest Messenger's speech Euripides ever wrote, aided by a very effective translation (the work of a former member of our company) could not fail to grip any audience, and I never suffered the ignominy of feeling that I had not ' got it over.'

At the Old Sarum performance we acted on a stretch of grass at the far end of the enclosure, against a high mound of masonry, backed by a lowering sunset sky barred with heavy clouds ; an appropriate if (for the audience) not very comfortable setting for a tragedy. I had finished my tale of disaster ; Theseus—a tall commanding figure with a plangent voice—had given his grudging permission for his son to be borne back to the palace, and I had just turned to take his message back to Hippolytus's attendants, who would bring him forward during the chorus whose first bars were now being sung. It was one of the moments when audience and partially incongruous surroundings were forgotten, and for a space I was living in the story I was helping to portray. Then, as I turned, I saw that the party carrying the stricken Hippolytus had anticipated their cue, and were already advancing on to the high bank at the far corner of our ' stage.' The group moved slowly, with a mournful, dragging step. It stood out bold and black against the angry sky behind. The torches carried by the two leading attend-

ants burned smokily in the strong wind, and after them four figures, their heads bowed, their whole demeanour expressive of speechless grief, bore on their shoulders the bier with the dying Hippolytus. No producer on earth could have bettered that spontaneously grouped entrance ; and to me the tale I had just told, familiar though it was to me, seemed to have come to life. For a moment I held my breath, shocked into the conviction that this was *real*, that it was in truth Hippolytus who was coming down the grassy slope towards me,

‘σάρκας νεαρᾶς ξανθὸν τε κάρα  
διαλυμανθεῖς.’

‘*With his youthful limbs and his golden head  
Shamefully wounded.*’

One of our performances on each of these tours, regarded always as the climax of the whole fortnight, was given inside the walls of Corfe Castle. Two years after I had played ‘the passionate and weighty *Nuncius*’ in that lovely place, I devoted the greater part of a brief holiday from work in London to wandering over Dorset and Somerset, mostly in the tracks of our company’s tours. One day I spent walking in a leisurely way round the Isle of Purbeck, and the book I took in my pocket was a copy of *Hippolytus*, in Greek. Most of the English version remained firmly in my memory, and with its help I was now able to read and appreciate large and satisfying portions of the original text. After a couple of hours’ walking and a perfect bathe in a tiny cove below the cliffs, I lay on a headland overlooking the sea and opened *Hippolytus*. I read fitfully, feeling rather drowsy. It was a still, warm day ; a light haze covered the hills and the sea ; bees hummed over the thyme and clover of the cliff-top. Below me the sea stretched grey, smooth,

and dully gleaming, like a huge piece of silk ; and its never-ceasing murmur wove itself gradually into the rhythm of the lines I was reading.

I had reached one of Artemis's speeches at the end of the play—I think it was the final one where, coldly and dispassionately, the goddess withdraws herself from her stricken servant—

‘ καὶ χαῖρ’. ἐμοὶ γὰρ οὐ θέμις φθιτοὺς ὁρᾶν  
οὐδ’ ὄμμα χραίνειν θανασίμοισιν ἐκπνοαῖς.  
ὁρῶ δέ σ’ ἤδη τοῦδε πλησίον κακοῦ.’

*‘ Farewell. I may not look upon the dead,  
Nor with the breath of dying be defiled.  
And thou, I see, art close upon that end.’*

I stopped reading and raised my eyes from the book. Immediately, as the beat of the lines ceased to sound in my mind, I realised that the same rhythm was continuing in the surge of the waves beneath me. I listened carefully and long. It was unmistakable : the sea's rhythm was iambic.

I felt that I had stumbled on the origin of Greek tragic verse. Was not the sea a part of almost every Greek landscape ? Would not every Athenian be accustomed to the noise of its waves in his ears ? Could not the cry of Xenophon's men, ‘ Θάλαττα, θάλαττα,’ have been as much an utterance of longing to *hear* the sea again as a joyful acclamation of the sight of it ? . . . It did not take long for my mind to change and reject this theory for romantic imagination ; but for that moment I had felt as if I knew the same elemental surge of slow recurring stresses that had sounded in the brain of Euripides as he fashioned the lines I had been reading. Since then I have sometimes listened for the iambic rhythm in the running of burns ; but I am convinced that water runs over rocks in trochees, not iambics,



as consistently as a railway-train runs in dactyls or anapæsts. Schubert knew that when he set *Wohin*. The iambic rhythm is an oceanic one. Even to-day I cannot hear the sound of waves upon a beach without listening to catch their rhythm ; and once I have recaptured the beat of iambs it stays with me as long as the sea is within hearing.

The third experience was about five years ago, and occurred in a boat off the rocky coast of Wigtownshire. I had gone out towards sunset with three companions to shoot the rock-pigeons which nested in the cliffs. It was an almost unnaturally calm evening, and we drifted silently into the narrow clefts where the sea lapped gently against the rocks, scarcely dipping the oars for fear of frightening the birds before we could get within shot. I have, I confess, no sentimental qualms over the shooting of any wild bird ; but that evening I did feel a reluctance to kill the pigeons which may have accounted for my missing almost all I fired at. This reluctance was born of my sudden glimpse of the first pigeon we saw. It darted across one of the steep gullies at the bottom of which our boat lay gently rocking on the dark-green water, and vanished into safety in a coign of the opposite wall before a shot could be fired. It swerved in the air, as though doubtful of its way ; then with a glad swoop of certainty it sped forward, turned upward, and disappeared into some invisible cranny below the overhanging brow of the cliff.

There was such speed, such grace, and such happy confidence of refuge in that swoop, that it struck me with the vividness of a personal experience. For an instant I seemed to see into the bird's mind, and to thrill with its own exhilaration of assured safety. Why should this be ? It was as though I had seen the same occurrence, or some part of it, before.

Then I knew. Into the back of my mind had come the first line of the loveliest chorus in *Hippolytus*, that in which the Troezenian women, sympathising with the unhappy Phaedra who is so soon to die by her own hand, sing of their yearning to fly far away from the palace whose sunny terraces are haunted by misery and impending doom. They long to escape with the flight of the sea-birds to the distant Adriatic and the cypress-fringed waters of Eridanus, or to the fabulous Hesperides where beside the dark-blue ocean grow the celestial apple-trees. It is the same emotion, the same longing for escape and peace, as filled the Hebrew poet who cried 'O for the wings of a dove, that I might flee away and be at rest.'

' ἡλιβάτοις ὑπὸ κενθμῶσι γενόμεν.'

The untranslatable word in that line is the 'ὑπὸ.' It includes, as I realised at that moment, more than a single word of English can contain. Up—in—under : so had the pigeon flown to its refuge in 'the steep hiding-places.' So must Euripides have seen a sea-bird dart to its nest in the cliffs of Attica. For an instant, sitting in that swaying boat under the red rocks, while the sunset ebbed down the sky and the water lapped quietly at my side, I again felt the mind of the poet reaching out across the centuries to touch mine.

## *A CANOE IN FLORIDA.*

BY MAJOR R. RAVEN-HART.

THERE is a legend that, when Italy entered the Great War, the Republic of San Marino decided, as an act of solidarity, to declare war on Austria ; and found herself unable to do so, because she had forgotten to make peace at the end of the last ‘hostilities.’

A curious, and in this case historical, parallel exists in the United States : peace was never concluded with the Seminole Indians, no treaty was signed—hostilities merely ceased. Possibly the American Government was justifiably ashamed of past double-dealings and treacheries towards the Indians : possibly it realised that those Indians would not be likely to take any treaty seriously after previous ones had been so cynically violated—in any case, the fact remains that in theory the Seminoles are an unconquered and ‘hostile’ race within the territory of the United States.

Hostile they may be, officially : very friendly they are in reality—my canoe-cruise began auspiciously, at Silver Springs, where America’s inglorious ‘Seminole War’ started, where Osceola, that Indian leader whose capture in violation of a flag of truce is a stain on American military records, first came into prominence—auspiciously with a hand-shake from a Seminole warrior, picturesque in his national dress of blouse and short skirt, elaborate geometrical designs of blue and red and green patchwork, seated in his cypress-log dug-out beside my boat. It was a handshake across the ages, from the most primitive type of canoe to the most modern, from a hollowed-out solid log to a col-

lapsible, which, with its hull of layers of canvas and rubber vulcanised together, is as modern as the motor-car tyre.

Silver Springs is one of those fountains of clear water that are a feature of Florida rivers. The water here is so transparent that even at depths of eighty feet the bottom is as plainly visible as if the boat were floating on air. I was continually steering in panic to avoid running aground as we neared shallower parts : one such ' shoal ' we measured, and it was a good five feet deep—it looked like five inches. It was a disquieting experience to watch fish swimming below the canoe—alarming even, when it was a five-foot gar or a six-foot alligator over which we hovered : the only alligator seen, incidentally, other than those in a sort of zoo at the Springs, where one Ross Allen walked casually among them and kicked them out of his way as I might a pig, and tied them up for shipment.

The water from the Springs (some nine hundred million gallons a day of it) flows away down an eight-mile river, clear all the way, to join the Oklawaha ; and we went on down this, cloudier but still far clearer than most European rivers which I have canoed, to join the St. John's at Welaka.

It is an impressive river, that Oklawaha, even oppressively so at times. Its valley is anything from a mile to three miles wide : I mean the flat part at the bottom of that valley, the part which a rise of a foot puts under water. As a result, side-channels abound, ' sloughs ' as they are here called (pronounced ' slews '). Often such a side-channel, taking off as much current as the main river itself, would have been indistinguishable from it, had it not been for the Government map : once, in a moment of inattention, we did take a slough in error—fortunately it petered out into a ramification of small, tree-blocked channels within half a mile, not therefore giving us a long pull back

to the entry. The main channel is kept clear of snags—the river is still officially navigable, the bridges are on turntables: perhaps a dozen motor-cruisers make the trip up to Silver Springs in a year, a bridge-tender told us. (Now that is a job . . .)

All this flat, marshy land is thick with trees, cypresses principally with their huge conical boles in the water, their heavy branches showing delicate acid-green foliage that looked as out of place on them as feathers on a hippopotamus, and loaded with draperies of Spanish moss, penants of it trailing down to the water-level. There were willows, of course; but there was even more myrtle, and behind the thickets that they made were ash-trees, and bay, and gum-trees. Rarely did the bluffs that edge the river-flats reach the water: where they did so it was like a sudden glimpse of another world, rolling slopes with coarse grass, and what America calls 'cedars,' and even groves of oranges and grapefruit.

One of our stops was at a fishing-cabin (it was March, and even in Florida March nights can be unduly chilly for a tent) just across from what had once been the centre of an orange-estate. The present owner told us that it had been the property of an Englishman, 'frozen out' literally like so many others in the exceptional winters of 1895 and 1899: we plucked tree-ripe fruit from surviving trees, half-hidden to-day by scrub-oak and sparkleberry. Our host (he owned the fishing-shack also) gave us careful directions how to find 'Blue Spring,' another of those sudden, clear stream-sources. It was along a slough, and then up another branching from it, completely over-roofed by tree-branches, and with lianas ('vines,' they call them) dripping to the water and having to be pushed away to let us through. Nowhere have I felt so lost on a water-

way as here, so much in jungle-depths and that jungle-silence which is in reality a lace-work of tiny sounds that come from everywhere and nowhere. He had warned us to remember the way back, and, above all, not to explore farther : he himself, he told us, had lost his way only that spring in that labyrinth of narrow channels, and had thought himself lucky to get out again before 'dusk-dark.' His negro caretaker, working the ferry for rare cars crossing there, repeated and emphasised the warnings : 'Iffn you-all onct git losted in thar, you jest as good to figger on *staying*, thouten you done blaze yo' way. Don't *nobody* cold-out know all them slews ; and you cain't most never tell where-all yo' at with ever'thing all yopped-up that-away.' ('Yopped-up' is a lovely phrase—'messed up,' 'muddled' it means.)

Perhaps the most pleasant evening was that spent at one of the rare bridges, camped near the bridge-tender's little house. We were invited to it to drink coffee after we had had our meal (Robert, my Florida companion, cooked), and we sat there and chatted with mother and fifteen-year-old son. Later Robert felt the need to stretch his legs while I lay in the tent and smoked, and walked the half-mile or so to the little hamlet : he had a story to tell on his return, of a village girl who in the dark had taken him for a village-Robert and hailed him by name, to his astonishment—with this unusual introduction they got friendly, and walked together, and she took him to her home and played hymns to him. (Yes, I know ; but that was the story he swore to.) Later again a boy from the village brought his fiddle and joined the bridge-boy's guitar : they played old tunes, practising for the 'square dances' that are a feature of country life here (and if you have never taken part in one you don't know what real unspoilt dancing

can be). I fell asleep to 'Cluck Old Hen,' which is (you may know the fact) the tune that Shakespeare used for 'Heigh-ho, the wind and the rain'; and woke with a mocking-bird sitting on one of the guy-ropes and running casually through fragments of its limitless repertory.

Birds abounded, herons chiefly, the big grey-blue beauties; and annoyed black-and-white kingfishers, and hawks, and buzzards. Humans were very rare, even at those bluffs: elsewhere we saw no one but occasional fishermen, going up in their motorised rowboats to look to their many lines, attached to stakes planted in the mud or to wires strung across slough-mouths—catfish seemed to be their chief catch. We could never decide from what habitations they came in this wilderness: many of the sloughs no doubt lead back to the bluffs a mile or so away, but none other than the natives know them. One slough which looked tempting we decided to explore, cautiously, with incessant halts to be sure we were not getting 'yopped-up': we found a casual log lying just below water-level not far from the entrance, just deep enough to make the passage of a canoe or small boat impossible without removing it. At the same moment Robert spotted a five-gallon glass jar standing near the water's edge, and we heard an unconvincing 'scrooch-owl': we left hurriedly, at his urging—bootleggers running an illicit still do not encourage the curious visitor.

The trip ended at Welaka: we could have gone on down the St. John's to Jacksonville, our destination, but this river was too wide, unfriendly after the secretive, hushed little Ocklawaha, so we decided to finish by road. Small boys, interested as everywhere, goggled at the boat as we unbuilt and showed its apparent fragility: 'I'd be right smart oneasy in a boat like that,' said one of them; 'dogged iff'n I'd row across the river thataway.' Another flashed

into anger at him : ' Why, you sorry jessy ! I'd jest as lief go to Jacksonville in it, excusin' it might could blow too hard. Why, I mean they jest perfeckly enjoyed it, all two of them ! '

He was right.

*Jacksonville, Florida.*

MAIRI.

*Unquiet my heart  
When she is near,  
As the woods  
In the young year.*

*Wilder my thoughts  
Than birds that soar  
In blue air  
By the lake shore.*

*Would she but hear  
The songs I made  
By the brook  
In the hazel glade.*

*Oh, heart be still  
And let her pass,  
As grey mist  
On the sweet grass.*

*And dream of her  
With the dark eyes,  
When stars come  
And a wind cries.*

JOHN IRVINE.

*Belfast.*



## *STORM LIGHTER.*

BY VIOLET CAMPBELL.

THE water swelled up with a heavy and sullen movement over the pebbles : it sank through them, hissing, leaving them darkened, wet, dimly gleaming. Their colour was leaden, the same colour as the sea, the same as the sky where the mist still obscured the rising dawn.

Julia went down to the very edge of the water. She scrambled the wet pebbles under her shoe, excitedly happy, smelling the salt in the air, feeling the cold strangeness of the early morning. 'This is fun, this is an adventure,' she felt, 'this is the sort of thing I really like.' For even going for a trip with a fisherman was better than lying around on the sand all day, smothered in oil, like a sardine, which was all the other visitors seemed to think of. Getting up in the dark in the little hotel bedroom, creeping downstairs noiselessly so as to disturb no one, walking alone through the misty sea-lane that was so silent one's footsteps echoed like cannon shots, all this was really rather amusing.

A cold tongue of the sea suddenly swept over her ankles, drenching her thin stockings and canvas shoes. The shock of it took her breath : the sea's arrogant indifference exposed it at once as something powerfully alive.

A step crunched above her on the shingle. 'Ah, you're 'ere, miss. Didn't expect a lady to be so punctual.' He coughed apologetically. 'Dull mornin' it looks ; but they'll be bitin'.'

He wore a dark beret, a blue high-necked jersey and huge sea-boots into which his trousers were tucked : the soles of

his boots were thick and white like a Chinaman's. In a business-like way he strode to his boat, cast off the painter, rummaged about within her : then raising her to an even keel braced himself against her side. 'Aye, you need two to this job,' he said heavily, 'one a' each port.' Eagerly Julia came forward. 'Let me help !' she cried. She laid both hands on the gunwale, prepared to push.

Nothing happened for a minute ; then all at once, with a steady and grinding movement, the vessel slid from under her fingers, the man racing beside it down to the sea. Her uselessness having thus been made manifest, Julia was left to walk soberly down to the boat. The fisherman gave her a hand.

'Step sharp, missy,' he said. 'You London ladies don't like to get wet, I knows.'

'I'm wet already, and I *hate* the word "missy," and "London lady," too, for that matter,' thought Julia, but she didn't say this ; she was far too busy climbing in over the boat's high nose, and after that finding a place to sit on that wasn't wet, dirty or piled with ropes and tackle. The fisherman stood up in the stern, zigzagging his blade through the water. He was full of talk, he pointed out everything. In a few minutes they reached the motor-boat at her moorings, transferring themselves from this to that. The tarpaulin was lifted, the engine set going, the motor chug-chugged through the lumpy seas, the shore became a jagged line rapidly sharpening in the growing light, yet rapidly falling behind. And as soon as the boat took the swell the rocking motion was so bewildering yet so intoxicating that all other thoughts left Julia : she sat enchanted, wrapped in the sound and the scent of salt water. Chatting continually, the fisherman threw out the lines, baited with spinners, knotting their free ends round flat pieces of cork which he thrust

below the thwarts. Out into the grey sea they chugged slowly, the lines streaming behind. Suddenly the water ahead became alive ; the whole surface was broken by innumerable dancing flashes, like a boiling crust laid upon it : the fisherman changed his course, chasing this tumult, which retreated even as he advanced. After a few minutes, with some anxiety, he pulled up his lines : from the last one there flashed into the boat a kicking, jerking slip of green and silver.

‘ Live bait,’ said the fisherman happily, his fears dispelled : he took the mackerel’s head between his knees and from each flank just above the tail he cut out a silver wedge shaped like a fish. With these he re-baited the lines, flinging them wide, letting their weights run them through ; the bloody mackerel, leaping convulsively, fell to the bottom of the boat.

Frozen, Julia stared at it. The striped body arched and twisted, then stiffening, quivered from head to tail : it opened its bloody jaws wide, wider, its gills extended hideously, preposterously, as if to force from this unknown world some means whereby to live. Its dying agony made her feel quite sick : she turned her eyes away ; at once they encountered the sea’s horizon, calm, untroubled, and on its edge a grey finger pointing, silent and stately.

‘ Aye, that’s the light’us,’ said the fisherman. ‘ We’ll be tacking between that an’ these rocks now, followin’ the shoals. You keep your ’and on that line, miss, keep a’swingin’ it. That makes ’em bite quicker ; we can’t afford to miss the fish.’ He pulled up another as he spoke, twisted the hook from its jaws, dropped it into the boat : it added its leaping body to the pile.

‘ I—I’d rather—couldn’t we, instead, go over the light-house ? ’ asked Julia faintly.

He settled his back comfortably against the stern and let himself go. 'Sorry, missie, that you couldn'. For why? No visitor's even bin up that lighter in livin' memory, except one, a Miss Stevenson, daughter of the keeper way back when it was built. But she were crazed a bit, poor thing, and they do say she went up so as to throw 'erself down, in revenge on 'er sweet'eart, if you understand me. But she didn' do it, for the tide went down an' left the rocks bare an' I reckon they looked cruel-like, an' she thought of 'erself lyin' broken on them rocks an' she didn' want for 'er lover to see 'er like that. Anyway, they got 'er down at the finish with a rope around 'er; an' after that she turned religious for a bit, an' then she started a serciety for feedin' the wild creatures (as if they couldn' feed theirselves!)—an' at last, one wild winter's mornin', when she was gettin' quite an old woman, she was a'feedin' of seagulls, an' she fell down the face of the cliff, an' there they found her, lyin' on the rocks, after all.—There's a fish on your line, miss, 'aul in.'

Julia dragged in the thin cord; the lead came clanking against the side, she pulled up the fine gut: there was a slither, a flurry, a splash, and she was left with the empty hook in her hand.

The fisherman gave her one look. Elaborately he turned away.

'Aye, that were Miss Stevenson, quite a character she were; but no woman 'asn't been up that lighter before nor since. There ain't much to see there, in a manner o' speakin', a small odd-fashioned place it is, dangerous to get at, an' 'ard to climb. Sixty-five feet to the first platform. They say, too, the witches o' these parts laid a spell on it; many a lassie's wanted to go there to fling 'erself down, like, but the good Lord 'as stood up against the witches, an' no one's ever visited the light.'

‘ But surely somebody goes up there ? ’

‘ Aye, surely ; the lamp ’as to be tended, else there’d be wrecks. All along the coast there’d be wrecks if that little old lighter wasn’t kept goin’ ! But this is the way of it : the keeper, that’s Tom, that’s Tom Penguthy, ’e goes over once a week, when the tide serves, an’ ’e sees to everything an’ ’e sets all goin’—ah, ’ere’s a beauty. Now *this* is ’ow to do ! ’

Hand over hand he pulled in the line over the boat’s edge. The water dripped spattering on the boards as he coiled the slack, the taut end raced hissing through the waves, bearing first a flash of pale green, then of silver, then a heavy fish extended and motionless. Swiftly it was raised over the side and in a second its angry flappings sounded from the boards. ‘ Whiting,’ said the fisherman. ‘ Just pass it back a minute, miss, I’ll——’

Julia recoiled. She couldn’t touch that living, leaping bloodied agony.

‘ —that is, if it won’t soil your ’ands.’

Her hand lay on the gunwale. It looked incredibly alien—soft, white, unreal, like an exotic flower. London lady ! she thought, half-amused, half-saddened. She looked at the hands of the fisherman—encased in deep yellow horn, with extremely thick fingers, unspeakable nails, and encircled round the wrists with a dirty bandage only half-concealing the ‘ boils ’ which he had told her he got in cold weather. She shuddered. All the same, his hands looked capable, the hands of a man.

‘ Aye,’ he said, as if following some thought, ‘ work soils ’ands. It’s men ’as does the work of this world : there’s no mistaking that. Yes, when it comes to the point, it’s men does the work.’ He looked at her, as if reckoning up her inadequacies. Then he leant forward and bowed ponderously. ‘ Except, of course, *sometimes*.’

His belated chivalry, with its absurdly inadequate expression, and his grotesque good manners, convulsed her. What *does* he mean? She wondered. 'Childbirth? Grace Darling? Nurse Cavell?' She felt hurt, nevertheless.

The boat had turned back and was heading for the shore. A sudden whim assailed her. Quite mad, of course; but why not? Holidays at the seaside can be boring enough, heaven knows. Besides, she felt aggrieved. Helpless, weak, timid, he thought her. Well, she'd show him! 'You say this man, the keeper, goes over once a week?'

'Aye, about that: but 'e's not certain. 'E's 'is own master, 'e works it in to fit 'isself. Yes, 'e's a rare bird, is Tom: a bachelor too, but a wonderful way with wimmin.'

'Would he take *me* up, do you think?'

'You could ask him. You'll be a brave lass if you do. But why in reason should you be wantin' to?'

How could she tell him? How could she explain that it was to comfort herself, because his every action had made her feel alien to this lovely world of wind and water to which she felt she essentially belonged? All at once he turned and stared at the shore. 'Why, there's Tom 'isself! See that chap there, a'signalling to me? I reckon 'e wants me to take 'im out.' He looked at her. 'You're in luck,' he said.

On the farthest point of the promontory he stood, waiting for them—a sturdily built man with a strong brown eye.

'Mornin', Tom, nasty swell outside,' said the fisherman engagingly, as he drew up near the rocks.

'Mornin', William,' said Penguthy. He bore a little basket with him into the boat and sat down, avoiding the fishes' scales carefully. He didn't look much of a Lothario.

'This 'ere young lady wants for to go up into the lighter,

Tom,' said William. The stranger did not even give her the flicker of a glance. ' 'Taint no place for ladies,' he said shortly.

No more was spoken as they made their way over the water. 'If only the hotel people could see me now!' thought Julia: 'no breakfast, covered with mackerel scales, and about to follow in the footsteps of the mad Miss Stevenson.' Sixty-five feet to the first platform. Somehow the prospect seemed less alluring now it had become a possibility. 'Aye,' said William as if echoing her thoughts, 'many a one's changed their minds when they've come to the place.'

The lighthouse began to loom out of the sea larger and nearer; the tide was low, the rocks were exposed on which the pylon stood, the waves dashed among them angrily.

'Steady now,' said William, 'we don't want to be stove in.' He drew up gingerly on the farther side, where a cemented ramp gave a little security and held an iron ring. Into this he looped his boat-hook. Penguthy got out first, turning to give a hand to the lady: William also, steadying the bucking boat, assisted her: helped thus on both sides she stepped on to a little ledge; whence the first thing she saw, a few feet ahead of her, was the bottom of a ladder.

Outside the building was this ladder, attached to its curved surface only by iron stanchions; its rungs were iron too, as narrow as a finger and over a foot apart, the lower ones green with slime and seaweed. Little by little she forced her eyes to look up. Absolutely perpendicular the ladder ascended, to where, far overhead, a tiny platform showed black against the sky. On her narrow ledge she dared not even put back her head to look up at it, for fear of losing her balance.

'Well, are you a'goin'?'

She hesitated. Both men were looking at her, Penguthy for the first time. 'Yes, of course,' she said thickly. 'You go first.'

Without a word, hand over hand, Tom Penguthy went up the ladder. 'I mustn't wait,' she thought. 'I mustn't stop to think.' William was saying something. 'A word of advice, in case you've no 'ead for 'eights. Don't look down.'

With both hands she gripped a bar above her, putting her foot on the first rung. A push, and she was up—quite easy, like walking upstairs: except that here you had to find at each step a new grip for your hands. Another rung: another. Her heart began to beat faster—it was hard work pulling yourself up like this. She went up, step after step.

A sharp eddy of wind swept round the building like a snatching hand. 'What'll happen if my cap blows off? I can't let go to hang on to it.' At that thought her wits left her. All of a sudden she wondered what she was doing: she saw herself, a tiny shape, stuck high in mid-air to the ladder, like a fly to a wall. Her hands alone were keeping her there—if she let go, if she loosed her grasp, if she felt she couldn't stand this absurd constriction any more, this absurd and terrific pounding of her heart. . . . 'Don't look down,' sounded the fisherman's voice calmly. She stared straight before her at the wall, four inches from her nose. The stone was quite bare and of a gritty yellow. No barnacles on it, no weed, no moss. Of course not, too high and too windy. 'Oh God,' she thought suddenly, 'here I am, stuck: • I can't go up, I can't go down, and it's high and windy.' She was motionless, glued to her stance; she dared not relieve the clenched torture of her hands or raise her trembling and powerless feet. From the confused murmur of waters on rocks far below her a faint cry came up. 'Go



*on, miss : go on !*’ She shifted her balance, one hand tightened and took the strain ; the other groped up for a fresh hold. She was moving again, slowly, painfully : the smooth wall passed new stones under her eyes. Up, up, up. Sixty-five feet to the first platform ! Her breath leapt spasmodically, her heart, mixed with the cold airs, hammered in her ears.

Mechanically, as if propelled by some inhuman will, she gripped, relaxed, moved her straining muscles. The iron bars pressed painfully into the hollow under her instep, the bruise was already hurting where her knee rammed at each step into the rung above. Her forearms and calves were aching unendurably—‘ *I must rest, or I’ll let go,*’ she thought wildly, ‘ *I must stop, if only for a minute !*’ Her right hand reached desperately for some firmer hold : in that moment a grasp closed on it, it was dragged up, almost out of its socket, the fingers were pressed over and fitted into a groove in some horizontal ledge above : at the same time some warm and powerful lever passed under her shoulders, there was a tremendous heave, and the next moment she was lying sprawling over the ledge of the little platform. Tom Penguthy, rather red in the face, was opposite her.

Weakly she sat up, her back against the wall. ‘ So silly of me, can’t think why I’m breathless,’ she said, gasping, trying to smile. She dared not think of the frightful emptiness dropping down sheer just outside that wall. . . .

Penguthy was looking at her levelly, with a sort of reluctant admiration. ‘ Aye, you’ll be breathless,’ was all he said. He turned, and wiping his hands on a piece of gun-cotton, walked over to his machines.

Julia looked around. She was in a small dark room enclosed by a circular stone wall. The only light came through a narrow slit above the trap-door in the platform

through which she had just been pulled. On the opposite side a kind of bunk showed faintly, beside two hurricane-lanterns and a primitive cooking apparatus ; the floor was filthy and covered with oil : but what chiefly took her eye, filling, indeed, the whole centre of the room, was a large and antiquated-looking piece of machinery.

She sat a while, recovering herself. The man, completely absorbed, seemed to be applying some test to his machine.

He went to the opening of the platform and leaned over. She could not bear to see him. 'William,' he cried : 'I'll be a couple of hours.'

A faint voice floated up. He turned and looked at Julia. 'Well, miss, William's just a'goin' now. 'E's got 'is fish to sell. Now you've been 'ere, are you ready to go back with 'im ?'

Julia felt appalled. 'I—I don't *want* to go yet !' she said. 'I—I rather hoped I'd see the lamp or something.' She could not admit that nothing on earth could induce her to face that ladder again so soon.

The man strode to the opening. 'Lady wants to stay,' he announced shortly.

Crossing the room again he pulled himself up by a rope through a hole in the roof. A hasty exclamation followed from above : after a minute his feet descended, and once more he moved swiftly to the platform, looking towards the sea. 'Oyo !' he shouted over the water, cupping his hands to his mouth. 'Will ! Will-yum ! Short o' petrol. Bring ten gallon. Ten gallon ! O.K.'

He looked at Julia then, and for the first time he smiled. 'That's never 'appened before,' he said, as if this was certain to interest her. 'Now there's nothing to be done till 'e comes. Maybe you'd like some tea.'

He lighted the stove capably, brewed tea, brought out

some bread and a slab of tinned beef. 'Lucky I brought me dinner,' he said pleasantly. Her hunger echoed him. When they had fed he carefully tidied everything away. 'Did you say you'd like to see the lamp, miss?' he asked.

'First,' said Julia, fearing there would be more stairs, 'first, won't you show me the things in this room?' He began to talk. He explained the engine; he explained the air-pump; he explained the machine that kept the lamp revolving; and the clock that timed automatically the fog signal, one and a half minutes between each blast. He showed her the huge cylinder that turned continually, running on a bed of quicksilver three inches deep. He spoke of these things personally, as if he loved them. 'At one time,' he said, 'they 'ad to feed the lamp every two hours, like a baby, you might say: shift and shift about two men 'ad to be, and that was a livin' for them both; though 'ow they could 'a' managed with no water and no warmth and little space to store food, I don't know: but now there's this sump that 'olds ten gallon and feeds automatic.' He seemed as proud of the building's primitiveness and shortcomings as of the modern machinery. 'You'd not find another like this anywhere round the isles,' he said. 'They laid a telephone to the shore last year, but a storm washed it away in the spring. Yes, we gets some terrible storms 'ereabouts.'

He appeared to take a pleasure in talking to her. His voice, she noticed, was strong yet modulated, deepening sometimes as if to utter something inexpressibly true. 'The lamp's very necessary 'ere,' he said. 'If you'll go through the trap, miss, I'll show 'er to you. But steady as you go past that machine. That piston ought to be covered, really, for safety: but it's never seemed worth while, no one ever comes 'ere, only me, and I'm neat as a cat.'

He went up first. She grasped the rope, placing her toes

in the notches in the wall as he had done ; and as she did so, he, bending over from above, put his arm round her waist to help her. For no reason at all an extraordinary sensation passed through her at this contact. Startled, she glanced at him. With his back to her he was standing on a little ledge, similar to the one below, and staring up a short ladder. ' We'll use this one,' he said ; ' there's two ladders from 'ere, one a' each side, so you can take your choice in bad weather. A man might be blown off, else. An' this time *you* first.'

She went up in front, he followed. This ladder, being higher, was better protected than the one below, a sort of hand-rail ran along it : but she had in any case no fear of falling, for Penguthy was just behind her, she was between his arms. At the top a panel slid aside, they entered a small enclosed space : and at once were in the presence of something huge, and terrifyingly beautiful. A dazzling cylinder of rose-flushed crystal stood before them, solid, clear, yet cut into a thousand brilliancies. In awe and humility Julia gazed at this. It was the most lovely thing she had ever seen. ' May I touch it ? ' she begged. ' No,' said Penguthy. He showed her the tiny lamp inside, whose beam, magnified a million times, threw itself out so many miles to sea. She looked up as he spoke. His face was stained crimson, his eyes and his hair were rose. Her own hands too . . . she saw then that the walls of this place were of crimson glass, their glow suffused everything. Suddenly she hated it. It seemed cruel, exacting, treacherous. ' Let's go,' she implored. ' No. I've come 'ere,' said Penguthy, ' to feed 'er. Watch.' He lifted a can which he had brought with him and poured a clear liquid into a groove : he waited till it sank away, then poured again. ' That'll do,' he said then : ' in any case.'

When they were back in the living-room she discovered she felt afraid of him. He seemed immutable, like a force of nature. She was anxious, too. It was many, many hours since William had left. She would have liked to be back at the hotel for tea. She had gratified her whim, she had seen all over the lighthouse, the day was over, now it was time for an end.

She leaned against the opening and looked out.

The sky was dark and threatening. A swift wind had leapt up from nowhere, on the sea's edge the waters were heavily grey and from it the waves seemed to radiate in an incalculable and restless motion, rolling and slapping and plunging among themselves, their edges spurting an angry little crust of foam. The vague threat of this tumult seemed to answer a nameless fear in her own heart. As if by accident, as if to protect her from falling, Penguthy put his arm on the railing, leaning his shoulder towards hers.

His coat smelt of tobacco and salt water : there was his personal smell as well, a strong smell, like that of fir trees. A tremble ran through her. 'The wind seems to be getting up,' she said, shivering, moving away.

'Yes. It's a rising tide. Them rocks is all awash by now ; soon they'll be under water. When the tide rises, so does the wind. There's less space for the air, see ? Then that air gets stiffened and presses on the water, and it presses the water into waves, and they rise, too, with the swellin' tide, and the strong wind lashes them about.' His voice was calm, but his manner showed a hidden excitement.

He turned away from her. She stood there a long time, fascinated by the working of the water, and thrilled by the rising sense of storm. Every few minutes some wave larger than the rest raced hugely forwards, flinging itself upon the rocks and breaking up into shrill towers of spray. A sense

of tremendous and irresistible power came with it ; when it had passed, already, out of the turmoil, another wave was forming. Exhilarated by the enormous scene she turned again towards the little dark room. Penguthy had just come down from the upper storey. He was moving about quietly and busily. With a deft hand he was clearing up the oil-stains on the floor, filling and cleaning the hurricane-lamps, placing them where their light would fall to the best advantage, drawing out a folding-stool and setting it up by the stove. 'How *fussy* men are !' thought Julia, amused. 'Just like some Edwardian woman in her boudoir !' Then she checked. Something in his behaviour suddenly gave her the picture of a woman preparing a room for her lover. . . .

An intolerable nervousness swept over her. The sure and rhythmical movement of his firm body and hands, kin to the repeated urge of the waves outside, seemed to fall unbearably on her own body and mind.

'That man William seems a long time coming,' she said.

He straightened slowly and looked at her. 'Will's not comin'. I've known for the past hour Will wouldn't be comin' at all.' He paused and flung out an arm towards the sea. 'Can't you see no boat could land in this weather ? Can't you see a storm's a'comin' up, an almighty storm, too ? We shan't be able to get off till that's over. You'll 'ave to spend the night 'ere, with me.'

He spoke impersonally. He came closer then and stared her straight in the face. 'How are you goin' to like that, eh ?'

'This is where I show *no* agitation,' thought Julia. 'Just behave as if it was the most usual thing in the world.'

He did not seem to expect an answer. He busied himself about the stove. ''Tis a nuisance,' he said, 'not gettin' that oil. I'll 'ave to feed the lamp meself. It's a long time

since that's 'ad to be done. Would you like some more tea, miss : There's a little left. There's some biscuits too, somewhere, an' the rest of the beef : not much.' He spread them out ; he lighted the lanterns.

They ate quietly, speaking in low voices, listening to the confused thunder of the waters, the whistling wail of the wind and the tick-tocking of the brass clock.

She noticed now that he had set the engine going : a dull hum echoed from it against the rounded walls, and the piston was moving up and down like a handle. A faint vibration stirred through the whole building, and across the slit in the wall there flashed every few minutes a dull crimson beam of light.

Suddenly he spoke again. ' 'Tis a wonder you ain't married, miss,' he said : ' a lass as pretty as you are. Your lips is as sweet as a rose.' He kept his eyes on his tea-mug as he spoke : his words were impertinent, his manner deferential as ever. Julia was speechless : but she could not feel offended. In any case you can't put on airs, or stress the social grades, when you are alone in a lighthouse with a man whose food you are gratefully sharing.

For some time after this they sat silent. He cleared away when they had finished, and rummaging in the locker pulled out two rough sea-blankets. These he arranged carefully on the bunk : but not to his satisfaction. An old tarpaulin was hanging on the wall ; he took this and rolled it up and put it under the blankets as a pillow. ' There,' he said. ' You better turn in, miss. It's goin' to be a wild night, maybe you'll not get much sleep. I'm goin' aloft to feed the lamp.'

He disappeared up the trap, the lantern swaying in his hand, his heavy boots knocking on the stone. A long time passed. At last the boots came into view again.

‘ You still up ? ’ He put the lantern carefully down by the wall and glanced at the clock. ‘ Well, that’ll go till twelve.’

All at once he strode towards her. ‘ Come,’ he said ‘ give us a kiss for good night ! ’ He put his hand behind her and drew her to him sharply. From his hand, as it lay on her spine, a thousand feelings radiated, pulsing strongly up and down her body. His power flowed out of him, vibrating like a current. She saw his face close to hers, it was sweating faintly : his steady brown gaze held her, fixed her, compelled her. . . . She made no movement. He dropped his hand and turned quietly away. The place where it had been felt cold, empty, aching, as if a draught blew on it. She sank on the stool, unbearably agitated.

‘ Perhaps you’re not comfortable enough ? ’ he asked after a while, like an anxious host, surveying the couch she had ignored.

‘ No, no—I don’t want . . . I——’ She held her breath. A long shuddering shock took the building as a wave struck it, a scatter of fine spray shot up past the slit in the wall.

‘ Hear that ? ’ he said softly. ‘ Listen to the storm ! Here we are, safe and snug in this little place no bigger than a sea-bird’s nest. Safe and warm, and together. I often think o’ the sea-birds, lovin’ and nestlin’ in the dark, sheltered in their crag with the storm around them.’

He paused. His voice grew low and inexpressibly tender. ‘ Come, lass, you know what I want. Be kind : you want to be. What’s a kiss, my pretty ? ’ He put out his hand and touched her arm. His eyes caressed her. ‘ Are you feared ? Don’t be feared, little bird : you’re bound to come to it. See, lass, we’re all alone. There’s no one to hear if you did scream. But you won’t want to scream. You won’t want to do aught but smile and close your eyes and let me love you.’



‘Don’t, don’t ! Go away ! Leave me alone !’—How paltry, how feeble, the conventional phrases ! The wind howled round their eyrie, and on its wings came a high, lonely, desolate bird’s cry.

‘I am a man, as God made me,’ he said urgently. ‘Didn’t God make me and make this night o’ storm, and you and me to be together up here, alone among the high winds : You so fair, and a woman : and I dark and a man ; like the sun and the moon, that mate each other at nightfall and at dawn.’

He put his arm round her shoulders. This was the arm that had so surely pulled her into his stronghold. With his other hand he stroked gently the oval of her face. His lips parted in a smile, they were very near her own. She felt his heart beating against her breast, she felt herself dissolving in his embrace. A force as strong as the wind outside stirred within her, sweeping her along to give up thought, reason, conscience . . . to forget, to swoon, to abandon herself to this hour unmatched in reality, hung between sky and sea. Yes—there was a traitor, a traitor within herself ! Against this foe she must set her strength. . . .

She closed her eyes, summoning all her powers. Then, suddenly, with the whole force of her body she thrust him from her. He recoiled, he slipped on the greasy floor, he went back brokenly, a sprawling mass of limbs over the machine ; and as he went the piston struck him.

He lay there in the corner under the window, hunched up, his face hidden : and above him the beam came round again, cutting the darkness outside once, swiftly, with its red sabre.

An intense silence, like a hollow bubble, began to form itself : in this she seemed to hear only her heart, mixed with the soft thump-thump of the engine. She crept towards

him, noiselessly. She stooped over him : knelt. He was still warm. Do you stay warm after you are dead ? How long do you stay warm after you are . . . ? With a frightful effort she raised his head, twisting his face to the light. It fell back, white, inhuman, stony, this face that a moment ago had been so close to hers. Trembling, she slid her hand down. Where does one feel ? Heart ? Pulse ?—He wore a jersey under his coat : through this there came no movement at all. She took up his hand, trembling again. Under the wrist there beat a faint rhythm. As she held it, through the window above, a shower of spray fell on her shoulders with an icy prick.

Convulsively she leaped away, as if a hand had touched her. ‘I must think, let me think,’ she thought desperately. ‘What do I do now ?—Brandy ?’ She rose trembling, looked in the locker. Nothing but biscuits, tea-leaves, a cup and saucer. ‘Do you give brandy, anyway, to a man who’s been hit on the head ?—Cold water, perhaps ?—There was no cold water ; the little fresh water they had had been used for tea.’ She went to him again, took his hands up, rubbed them with all her might : it was no use ; already, rapidly, they were becoming colder.

She sank on the floor and looked at him. He looked worse with his face turned up. If she rolled him over he would lie, just like that : if she lifted an arm and dropped it, it would fall, just like that. She felt violently that she wanted to strike him, to thump him, to kick him, even, to make him rouse, wake up !—at the same time she felt she couldn’t bear to touch him any more. She got up and sat on the folding stool he had set for her ; her head on her hands, looking at him. The clock ticked, tick-tock. How long she sat she knew not. ‘This is frightful !’ she thought. ‘Oh God, why did this have to happen ? How can I stay here all night

facing this thing ? ' The wind answered her, stressing her complete isolation from human life.

Suddenly she jumped up and ran round and round the room. She sank again on the stool, panting and trembling. — ' It's no good, I can't escape from him like that ! '—This man who had desired her had achieved her most completely when he lay cancelled, a figure of death.

' I shall go mad,' she thought wildly. She raised her eyes in a panic. They saw the clock—a quarter to twelve. Some association crossed her mind : a swift message, a warning. The next second the red flash notched the window again and was gone.

The *lamp* !

Without any hesitation, with the most perfect clarity, she saw the picture of what she must do. Not go mad. No, indeed. ' All along the coast there'd be wrecks if that little old lighter wasn' kept goin'.' Perhaps out there in the darkness at this moment a ship was nearing, looking for this light. . . . ' Grace Darling ? ' she thought—' no, the Lady with the Lamp ? No, that's not right either.'—Her head was bursting with fears, and the excruciating knowledge of what she must do.

Ten to twelve, said the clock inexorably. She rose to her feet. Her body seemed weightless. She did not seem to feel anything any more. The rope hung down the wall from the floor above. She seized it and pulled herself up through the trap. Her trembling knees still held her up, she tottered across the boards and groped for the opening : a diffused silvery glow showed the stanchion of the ladder outside.

Could she remember how the lamp was fed ? . . . No, she hadn't the slightest idea.—She leant through the doorway, clutching the first support of the ladder. As soon as her

head was outside the wind took her scalp like a wave of iced water, stinging her hair round her face like whips. Gasping and choking she turned her head aside, to draw breath from the lee under her arm. Thus sideways, groping in the darkness for a hold, she raised herself and mounted the first rung. The wind ran up her skirt and tossed it from her, pinning it to the handrail, wrapping it round the bars of the ladder. 'It's only a skirt, it's only wool,' she thought fiercely, 'I am stronger than it: if I hold on tightly it *can't* drag me off!' She pulled herself up another rung. The immense night swirled around her, filled with huge shapes and spaces, and shrieking with the voice of the storm. Her hands, numbed with cold, could hardly tell if they touched iron or stone. Suddenly she panicked. 'Supposing I get stuck, as I did before? Oh God—Oh *God*, don't let me fall!—Be calm, don't get hysterical. Lots of other women have had to do things like this. Worse. Much worse.' She went up another rung. The wind in her ears took away all sense of reality: the whole forces of her reason were concentrated on four tiny recurring places—the holds for her hands and feet. At last, incredibly, she touched something else—the wooden beam below the opening: the space widened before her in a remembered way: panting, crouching, she slid the panel and pushed herself forwards. 'Oh God, thank you.' She lay, breathing heavily.

There she was, in a place of blinding light, only a few feet away from the enormous dazzling globe. The heat, the light, the sudden windlessness, overwhelmed her. She felt as if to faint. Her limbs seemed to swell to an enormous size and to go limp, like putty. Then she became aware of a quiet, continuous revolution. It harnessed itself to her mind—a calm, slow, sweeping rhythm. She heard the voice of Penguthy, as he bent over his task: she saw the oil

flowing from the can into the socket, along the arm, into the little drum. . . . The can stood in the corner ; three feet high, its spout was nearly as long. She lifted it, bent, poured. The fume of petrol rose about her. In a few seconds the socket was filled. She replaced the cork in the spout, put the can down by the wall. That was all. It was done. It would go now for another two hours. What a fuss, somehow, about a perfectly simple thing ! And how absurd that it couldn't be worked from below—pressing a knob, or something !—The security of this warm place restored her balances. She felt eased, she felt a little sanity flowing back from this nightmare night. Well, that was that. Now she must return. She slid the panel, wriggled to the ledge and looked out.

Instantly the full force of the gale struck her. Shielding her face, she looked up. Across the furious sky the clouds raced, torn into pieces by the wind : a break in their shaggy canvas showed for a moment the moon, cold and remote. Below it, at an infinite distance, lay the sea, its waters black and shining and lighted with grey on their crests. To look down thus tore the heart out of her body. There was nothing below her, nothing. The emptiness rushed up and hit her. The wall of the lighthouse fell down sheer : the ladder was, in any case, perpendicular : seen thus from above, it seemed, horribly, to be sloping *away*. . . . She drew her head in violently, feeling dizzy and sick. Nothing on earth could make her go down there.

She lay down beside the lamp. It was terribly hot. She began to sweat. The glare was terrific, she could not bear it. She closed her eyes against the light and instantly a crimson curtain descended, torturing her mind. She dared not think of the man downstairs, lying so white and quiet with the crimson stain spreading on his brow. . . . The

very marrow of her bones seemed to be melting. The metal of her watch burned into her wrist. Her watch! Yes. She was glad she'd got that.

At two o'clock she rose and fed the lamp again. Again she lay down.

At four o'clock she rose and fed it once more. ('Just like a baby, as you might say.') Once more she stretched herself by the burning edge of the monster. Her limbs were flaccid and utterly weary, her clothing was drenched with sweat, her eyes smarted intolerably. But she hardly knew this. The whole world had narrowed to one tiny room, one dissolution of heat, one huge blinding globe that revolved, revolved, revolved. . . .

Drowsiness crept over her. It was so hot, so silent. There was only the pulse of one's own body and this was driving the globe around. . . . This was driving the world around . . . it's *Love* that makes the world go round. . . .

Suddenly she awakened: a noise had aroused her. A small knocking noise, like the edge of a boot on a stone. She sat up, startled to the core, listening with her whole body. The storm had lessened: the wind had died.—There it was again, a step, coming up the stairs. Now it had stopped too—whoever it was was listening, too; and watching. Suddenly, she seemed to see him, Tom Penguthy, out in the darkness, crazy with revenge and his blow, creeping up the ladder, a knife in his mouth. But there were two ladders; thank heaven, she had remembered!—She leapt up, away from the sound: *her* ladder was on the other side. 'He shan't get me,' she thought frantically, 'I'll not be here!' The panel had stuck under the force of wind and water, or else her shaking fingers could not urge it. 'Naomi, daughter of Jew Suss,' she thought—'where do I jump from, where?' The panel shot back with a crack: she

swung round, feet foremost, precipitating herself outwards, her foot found the first step : she was outside.

A pearly dawn glimmered through the air. She saw herself going down the side of the pylon, a black fly down a wall, and he, on the other side, stealthily, steadily, going up. . . . Shaking with fear, in jerks she descended : only the horror above could have forced her down. Across the upper flooring she staggered, almost falling through the trap.

He was lying against the wall where she had left him. He still looked rather white : but now he was leaning on an elbow and his eyes held a dazed and friendly expression like a lost dog. 'I was just a'wonderin' where you had got to,' he remarked amiably. 'What time is it?'

She sank to the floor. She couldn't answer him. He was silent too : he seemed to be working something out in his head. ''Ave I been 'ere long?'

'Most of the night,' said Julia faintly.

'Did I—— Who tended the light? ' She didn't answer. He looked at her sharply.

'Please don't—please don't ask me. I can't—I can't bear to think of it——'

He passed his hand over his brow. 'We both seem a bit muzzy,' he said. 'What's wrong?'

'Tell me—did you go up the ladder just now? I heard a step tapping—I was terrified. I thought it was you, I——'

'I? No. I've'n't moved. 'Twould be a sea-bird, tired from the storm, seeking to enter and rest.' He spoke absently : below his words his recollection seemed to be stirring. He sat straight up and stared at her. 'I reckon you hated me last night,' he said at last. 'Can't think what took me.' She looked at him gently.

'No, it wasn't you I hated. It was something in myself. I don't know. Never mind.'—All at once her fears, her

passions, fused into a sort of pity for him. He looked so bewildered, so white, so hurt.

'I will kiss you now,' she said. She went over and took his rough face between her hands and kissed him on the brow where the wound had dried.

'Thank you,' he said. 'I knew you had some natur' in you, lass.' A little smile twisted his face. 'Don't understand wimmin, never did. Shouldn't ha' thought any but a mother could 'a' kissed like that.'

He rose to his feet pretty steadily and looked round the room. His mind seemed to be coming back by stages to the beginning. 'Whatever could 'ave kept old William?'

Faintly, coming up from the sea below, a shout hailed them. 'Tom? You there? 'Tis I. And I got yer petrol.'

Penguthy strode to the opening. 'And a darn long time you been about it,' he cried.

'Well, what with the storm, and—and——'

'All right. Let's 'ave it now.'

He let down a rope from the platform. The drum was tied to it, the rope was hauled up. Penguthy opened the drum and poured its contents into the main sump. He wound the clock, he shut the locker, he put away the lanterns: and then he turned to Julia. Under his workaday manner he seemed to be begging her for something. Her silence, perhaps, she thought. 'You ready to be goin' down now, miss?' he asked.

Julia paled: there was still that ghastly ladder to descend. At the bottom of it was the tiny white face of William, looking up. She remembered the mad Miss Stevenson. 'Couldn't you get me down with a rope around me?' she asked.

Without a word he knotted the rope under her shoulders.



It smelt of petrol, but it gave her comfort. For the last time she started again to feel for bars and rungs. . . .

‘Lost your nerve a bit, missy, eh?’ said William, untying the rope at the foot. ‘Tremblin’ too. Dear, dear! Well, I daresay it’s a bit scarin’ for the likes o’ you. An’ here comes Tom. Well, Tom, I’m sorry I was late with the ile.’

They all got into the boat; soon it was chugging familiarly over the water. Nothing seemed different. Even the mackerel scales were still everywhere. Julia looked at her skirt. It was torn, stained with oil, and green with slime. A quick upheaval of thought came to her. What could she say to those inquisitive people at the hotel? How explain her absence all night, her wild appearance, her ragged clothing?

‘Aye, summat’s ’appened since you left, Tom,’ said the fisherman. He still sounded apologetic. ‘Two of them flyers in this new Air Race landed ’ere ’bout midday yesterday; what with ’earin’ about ’em I got delayed with yer ile. When I was ready there was a tidy sea runnin’ and a gale of wind: I couldn’ get to you, and they couldn’ get off neether. The whole village ’as been around ’em a-watchin’ their machine. At las’, come nightfall, they was frettin’ mad with the delay, and what finished them was ’earin’ over the wireless of another bloke what had got ahead. “Let’s risk it,” cries one of ’em, “the light’us ’ull guide us for a start, and then maybe we’ll get to fly above the storm.” So they sets off, we wonderin’. And there was yer little old light, Tom, blinkin’ away, steady as the sun. Well, ’ardly was we ’ome again when a chap ’ears their whirr in the sky, and would ye believe it, there they was, landed again, with one wing broken and little life left in ’em. “We couldn’ make it,” they says, “the wind’s too strong. We could only come back again, lookin’ for the light’us and the lay o’ this

landin' ground." An' I thought o' you, Tom, and the ile I should 'ave give you ; but I knew as 'ow you'd 'ave kept that light agoin', even if it meant feedin' by 'and. So what with mendin' their machine and takin' autographs and that, everyone's been up since dawn and now they've just left for to——'

The boat grated on the shingle. From the field near by a crowd was just beginning to disperse. Julia bumped straight into the hotel landlady. 'Oh, there you are, miss. So you've been on the lighthouse ! Well, that would be quite a little adventure for you, I'm sure. Did you enjoy it ?'

Julia leant weakly against the sea-wall. Her agonies, her terrors of the night, her aching limbs and splitting head, her clothing soaked with sweat and salt water, the variety of her emotions, her screaming nerves and the service she had forced from them, passed before her.

'It's a pity you missed seeing the aeroplane ; but the men were working on it all night, and it left this morning.'

'Aye,' corroborated the old fisherman. Some association stirred in him. He gazed at Julia. 'Aye,' he said kindly : 'the work of the world's done by the men.'

Suddenly Julia found her tongue. Her hunger, her tiredness fell away. She felt gay, elated, triumphant. She smiled at the landlady : she smiled at Penguthy : she smiled especially at William.

'Except, of course,' she said solemnly, '*sometimes* !'

## BY THE WAY.

Two young clerks were lately overheard talking politics : one, a Socialist, was expounding his creed, to which the other exasperatingly kept rejoining, 'Nonsense.' Finally the Socialist, angered, demanded, 'Well, what are you ?' 'A Conservative,' answered his companion. 'Why are you a Conservative ?' demanded the Socialist : the other didn't know, but, pressed, said at length that he supposed it was because his father was. It is no doubt a good reason, at any rate in British eyes, to advance for many things : is it quite satisfactory as a justification for opinions, which are—or surely should be—a man's own individual mental equipment ? The point which is too important to labour is that the one knew why he held certain opinions and was not only able but eager to give his reasons and seek to convert his associates ; the other did not know, could not state, and was indifferent to, his—that is by no means uncommon, and it is at once the strength of the Socialist and the weakness of the Conservative, which, if not recognised and fought, can have in the long run but one end.

★            ★            ★

More wit from the Far East :—

'Question : What are Japan's conditions in reaching a settlement with the Chinese ?

Answer : Japan wants the complete abandonment by the Chinese of the notion that Japan is their enemy.' (Published by the Foreign Affairs Association of Japan.)

Japanese General (*loquitur*) : 'How in the world did they get that notion ? Bomb some more towns, shoot 'em up and kill a lot of women and babies—that at least must make 'em see what friends we are !'

★            ★            ★

It is, happily, by no means uncommon in my experience for the post-bag to contain a reader's cordial commendation of the CORNHILL : but seldom is that expressed in verse, more seldom is it flavoured with wit, and most seldom is any comparison with any of its contemporaries offered. Hence it was with special pleasure that I received from the pen of one who has been a reader of the CORNHILL for no fewer than 64 years the following commentary, with its felicitous playing on the names and reputes of the only two magazines left which have any serious claim to be considered rivals :

*Between my northern chambers and my big black wood  
I have a golden corn hill bearing grain so good :  
My chambers are for resting or for reading by the fire  
And my big black wood is calling for adventures and desire ;  
But my little golden corn hill, ripe and rounded to the top,  
Still calls to me to climb it—and I cannot stop.*

\*            \*            \*

I was writing the foregoing note in the interval of waiting for a business meeting to begin when my neighbour, who bears a name widely honoured in the City, noticing my employment, seized a pencil and wrote down some lines which he passed to me, saying that they were not only his only offering to the Muse but the only piece of original composition for which he had ever been paid. Thus vibrant are the chords of memory. The lines entitled (almost in anticipation of Dan Leno) 'The Curate and the Bee' at any rate establish that what Literature lost Business has gained :

*He stood where she stood  
Beside the beautiful snow-white rose :  
Gently he bent his head and sighed ;  
Then buried his mouth and nose  
Amidst the petals so sweet and rare  
That the maiden's lips had pressed,  
And the bumble bee which was lurking there  
Proceeded to do the rest !*

Written many, many years ago—a crime of adolescence—the verse yet has a distinctly modernist ring.

\*            \*            \*

There are few stories of, or arising out of, the sea more grim than the sequel to *The Wreck of the Grosvenor* (Methuen, 10s. 6d. n.). Mr. Jonathan Lee, who has now written a graphic reconstruction of that terrible journey, which was to take, according to Captain Coxon's optimistic estimate, sixteen days, and was actually only accomplished by six men in one hundred and seventeen—and two more survivors were rescued later—says in his Epilogue that it is 'the story, not of death, but of survival. It is the story of endurance. It is the story, surely, of heroism.' This is an odd set of statements: it is beyond question the story of death, of failure to endure and of lack of heroism at least as much as it is of the reverse—the interest is that it contains both, and in full measure. Mr. Lee has treated it to the technique of the novelist whilst keeping as strictly as possible to the known facts, and he has with considerable selective skill avoided either the fullness of the horrors or the dreariness of repeated days of hopeless struggling—and he has emphasised the heroic side, especially in Lillburne and the child, as strongly as was justifiable. The result is a gripping tale which cannot be read with that stirring of mind which accompanies a re-entry into the world's great records of adventure and hardihood.

\*            \*            \*

Mrs. Marion Cran has acquired many friends by her successive gardening books: in her latest, *The Garden Beyond* (Jenkins, 10s. 6d. n.), she assumes from her readers acquaintance accordingly with much that is personal to herself, which makes some of her allusions difficult for any new reader to follow; and she goes farther afield. This is in reality less a book about a garden, its title notwithstanding, than a roam-

ing autobiography of recent experiences. The majority of its pages are taken up with an account of the author's visit to her daughter in Kenya, and much incidental talk concerning flowers and plants is brought in ; but the volume also records general impressions of the journeys to Kenya and back by air, of the days spent and visits paid there and of Mrs. Cran's work on her return in connection with the Coronation Planting Committee. It is all very pleasant if readers yield to the personal note and are content to follow and listen to Mrs. Cran wherever her pen takes her : if they do not, they may wish for a little more architectural planning of the book, less about people and more about gardening.

\*            \*            \*

Under the attractive title *Frontier Patrols* (Bell, 8s. 6d. n.)—which has a suggestion of more raciness than the actual contents bear out—Col. Colin Harding has written the history of the British South Africa Police and other Rhodesian Forces. He has, in fact, written a good deal more than this specialised history and has continually to be recalling himself to it from the wider issues into which his pen strays : that naturally adds to the interest of his book, which becomes the history of South Africa written from the special angle of the Police, though the Police have unquestioned claims to be heard on their own merits alone. Col. Harding says : ‘ We of the British South Africa Police claim the right to be accounted one of the best regiments of mounted police in or beyond South Africa ; also we assert that off duty we are equal to any in the field of sport ’—it is a large claim, but at any rate this painstaking, fully documented record contains all the material needful for an impartial decision as to its acceptability. But Col. Harding is a little severe on British policy :

‘ in our ignorance we fail to comprehend the mentality of the African native, for we take his country, we take his cattle, we depose his king, burn his home, commandeer his labour,

and commit all these misdeeds under the misnomer of the word "civilization." Then after this rigid confiscation, enunciating a desire for peace, we condescend to dwell in the land we have unlawfully annexed.'

This of our conquest of Rhodesia in 1894-5 : but why start off a chapter with so sweeping an indictment put into the present tense ?

\*            \*            \*

And so back to England, with all its beauty, history, and charm unequalled. This every lover feels : to few is expression given. But Mr. Llewelyn Powys is among the few. He has now followed up his *Dorset Essays* by his *Somerset Essays* (Bodley Head, 12s. 6d. n.) with Wyndham Goodden again as photographer. The title alone is a little amiss, for he is as much in Dorset again as in Somerset, but no reader will mind. The essays are as fresh and varied as English landscape and there is not one which will not be read with pleasure : Mr. Powys has a timeless sense : the Bronze Age is as real, as equal to him as to-day and perpetually one century recalls another, and he has in addition a most engaging way of starting each of his essays from an entirely original point of view—who, for instance, but he would begin his essay on Corfe Castle, 'When I was living in New York City with my fortunes at a low ebb' ? A book of scholarship, imagination, and simplicity, which will delight a host of readers.

\*            \*            \*

Another book on England, composed from a different angle but with a similar attraction and a knowledge of English literature which is phenomenal, is W. J. Blyton's *We are observed* (Murray, 7s. 6d. n.). Many readers will recall with great pleasure his *English Cavalcade*, in which, county by county, Mr. Blyton traced the association of writer and place : in his new book he has traced, with that wealth of quotation and illustration which his prodigious

reading has made possible, the English character as observed by English writers from the earliest days of the mystery plays down to the latest commentaries of contemporary novelists. It is a fascinating record and one from the perusal of which no reader can rise without a deeper understanding both of England and the English. It would be possible for a student of these pages to pass with credit an examination into his knowledge of many English writers of all kinds, even of those with whose works he had had no first-hand acquaintance.

\*       \*       \*

The multitude of books of that special form of the 'literature of escape,' the detective novel, that is, does not diminish: hardly a day passes without some investigation into a murder—committed in such public circumstances that many were present at, or at any rate adjacent to, the scene of the crime—being offered up in print for private solution. It is perhaps a reflection upon the taste of the times, but on the other hand there is no denying that many of these novels are no longer content merely with presenting a puzzle, but offer also excellent characterisation. One of the best of late is Mr. Henry Wade's *The High Sheriff* (Constable, 7s. 6d. n.): Mr. Wade has already given his readers previous puzzles set in a sporting shire; now, with knowledge derived from his own distinguished personal record, he sets before his readers a problem involving not only hunting and shooting but a high dignitary of the shire. It is beyond question an admirably written and ingeniously constructed story: the only doubt left in the mind of one reader at any rate concerns the adequacy of the motive. Murder does in real life remain—even in this tempestuous age—a serious crime; and yet people in fiction contemplate, and execute, it as though it were a perfectly ordinary solution of disagreeableness.

G.



## THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

### DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 172.

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answers, containing the coupon from page iv, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach him by 26th February.

‘ And in your ——— ——— reach the spot,  
Where I made one—turn down an empty Glass !’

1. ‘ All night has the casement ——— stirr’d  
To the dancers dancing in tune ;’

2. ‘ Over the mountains  
And ——— the waves,’

3. ‘ The hero’s harp, the lover’s lute  
Have found the fame ——— shores refuse ;’

4. ‘ O Phil ——— fair, O take some gladness  
That there is juster cause of plaintful sadness !’

5. ‘ In the broad daylight  
Thou art ———, but yet I hear thy shrill delight—’

6. ‘ The moonlight ——— in silentness  
The steady weathercock’

Answer to Acrostic 170, December number : ‘ Than petals from blown roses on the grass’ (Tennyson : ‘ Song of the Lotos-Eaters’). 1. Reply-inG (Tennyson : ‘ Blow, Bugle, Blow’). 2. OveR (Browning : ‘ The Lost Mistress’). 3. SeA (Browning : ‘ Parting at Morning’). EyeS (Thomas Hood : ‘ Ruth’). 5. SpellS (Francis Mahony : ‘ The Bells of Shandon’).

The first correct answers opened were sent by I. L. Hobbs, 133 Clarence Road, Derby, and the Hon. Maud Russell, Kirkby Mallory, Leicester, who are invited to choose books, as mentioned above. N.B.—*Sources need not be given.*

THE  
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

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MARCH 1938.

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*CARLYLEAN COURTSHIP.*

BY E. THORNTON COOK.

CHAPTER X.

*'BE GOOD—BE DILIGENT.'*

THE treasured holiday hours that Carlyle had hoped to spend with Jane Welsh were still his when the Bullers gave him a temporary release. She forbade a visit to Templand and a longing for his own people assailed him. Looking down from the coach as it reached Ecclefechan he recognised his own youngest sister Jenny among a bare-legged group of schoolchildren pausing to watch the change of post-horses, and walked with the bright-cheeked, tongue-tied child to the small, newly whitewashed farm.

'Th'are like John, lad, a vast deal leaner sin' thou gaed awa', said his mother, pail in hand, greeting him on her way to the pigs, and Thomas looked at her with love in his eyes.

What could he give her? What did she need, this bright-eyed, active mother of his?

'Dear bairn, I want for naething,' she laughed when he insisted that she must buy herself something and let him enjoy it along with her. Putting him aside she went on to the styes, leaving Tom to find his father and gather Mainhill news from his brothers. 'Times were bad,' they told him, but the family was putting up a good fight. By feeding cattle, selling the barley and one odd thing and another, all hoped that at quarter-day the landlord's demands could be met.

‘ Only He who knows all things, kens what is before us,’ said James Carlyle quietly.

‘ May the Lord make us wise,’ added his wife with her eyes on her son’s face.

Something had happened to ‘ oor Tam.’ What was it ? Mags and Mary, grown dignified and shy of this strange brother from Edinburgh, guessed that there was a lass behind his silences, but as the mother pointed out, ‘ no one asked such things,’ and Thomas in his place ‘ down th’house,’ ignorant of his sisters’ surmises, sat contentedly among his own kith and kin, though occasionally he told himself that he was a mere unprofitable lout in the hive. What had he done to make good his place in the world ?

When the brief visit ended and Jean and Jenny walked with him to the coach, he looked back to the farm on the low hillside with a prayer in his heart : ‘ May the great Father of all give me strength to do better in the time remaining ; to be of service in the good cause in my day and generation ; and, having finished the work which was given me to do, to lie down and sleep in peace and purity in the hope of a happy rising.’

Routine life began when Carlyle returned to Perthshire. He taught, worked at his translations, and watched the trickling stream of fashionable visitors, seeing them all as futile nonentities. Jane’s letters alone broke the monotony of his days, and he would strain his eyes into the misty distance for hours, watching for the old grey postman on his grey pony who came shambling through the hills on his way to Aberfeldy, and thanking God for Jane Welsh ; since he had known her there had been at least one sunny place in his thoughts.

He needed some such incitement to happiness, for, as the

months passed, Carlyle's health grew steadily worse. The old house in which he had his quarters was both damp and draughty, and the servants were lazy and careless of his comfort.

Could he endure until the Bullers returned to Edinburgh, where he might have control of his own eating, drinking and sleeping once more? Though Edinburgh, with its noise and stench and lodgment in the house of some slut of a rapacious landlady, would scarcely give him the peace he needed. Would it be wise to fling up his post altogether, put a chair, a table and a bed into the peel-house at Mainhill and settle there until he had finished both *Schiller* and *Wilhelm Meister*? Could he have a month's peace, sound sleep, and freedom from pain, he would be a new man and one capable of working miracles; as it was, he felt himself to be dying by inches.

'Oh Schiller! What secret had thou for creating such beings as Max and Thekla when thy body was wasting with disease? If I could *write*, that were my practical use.' He felt that original composition, if ten times as laborious as translation, would be an agitating, consuming fiery business into which a man could put his soul; his present work made him feel as if he were a shoemaker gathering leather into a boot. How happy he would be if he could make five hundred a year, such a sum as a pampered lord like Byron would scorn, yet one that, to him, would mean freedom—and Jane. Jane? Her letters were becoming disturbing; scarcely one but told of some importunate lover, or appealed to Thomas Carlyle for advice as to how she should dismiss a too impassioned swain. In a brief postscript he dealt with a German youth who, selling books from door to door, fell tumultuously in love with Jane at sight; but when she wrote that, all unconsciously, she had

charmed a farmer's son of such known violence of temper that she lived trembling, Carlyle urged that she should act promptly. First she must cut off hope, 'for Love without Hope is like a plant rooted out of the soil which withers in a day.'

The young man would be wretched, for of course Jane's decisive 'No' would be as crushing as a thunderbolt, 'but in six weeks,' wrote the philosopher, 'unless he is excessively idle, or has a mind far stronger, or weaker, than that of any man I have ever met, he will have learnt to look upon the affair with composure; in twelve months it will have faded from his mind.'

The answer set Jane frowning, and even Carlyle's assurance that he knew her conduct in the matter had been as spotless as an angel's failed to appease her. Could the man love her, that he treated her *affaires* so coolly? Did he think her a coquette? But oh, how dull life was and how shallow-pated everyone around her. Why did not the one man in whom she believed achieve something!

She fumed when Carlyle assured her that however slow he seemed there was spirit in him, as there was in the lame duck belonging to his little sister at Mainhill, which was still useful in her generation. Had not 'the Craw' guaranteed that, by the blessing of Providence, it would lay another five shillings' worth of eggs, before Christmas?

Unappeased, Jane let three weeks slip by before she wrote again.

Schiller became an accursed piece of work as Carlyle struggled on unhappily.

Deprived of tobacco by doctor's orders and dosed with mercury, he swore that he was a man immured in a rotten carcase, every avenue of which was changed into an inlet of pain. Now, shivering beneath a load of rugs, now, toil-

ing ankle-deep through half-melted snow while a whirlwind roared through the Pass of Killiecrankie, he wondered why he did not kill himself. Was there not arsenic to be had, rat's-bane of various kinds, good hemp and cold steel :

'I want health, health, health !' cried Carlyle to the winds that threatened to blow in his windows, and gathered fresh courage as the pain lessened. Time enough for hemp and steel and rat's-bane when he admitted defeat, which was not yet ; there were books to be written and things to be said and done in the world ; nor must there be blasphemy against the Almighty, who had given him superior understanding and high mental gifts despite the infernal disorder in his stomach. Talents must be used.

The *London Magazine* began to publish Carlyle's '*Schiller*,' and one day Mrs. Buller laid *The Times* before her son's tutor with some smiling comment. Here, at last, was recognition—here were compliments undoubtedly genuine. Thomas Carlyle read and read again. What happiness there would be at Mainhill—and here was proof for Jane, if such were needed.

With renewed vigour he turned to his translation of *Wilhelm Meister* ; it might be that, through this work, he could seek an introduction to the author ; perhaps some day he and Jane would go to Weimar and spend six months there together, drinking in poetry and philosophy at the feet of Goethe—a dream project indeed !

Turning out his daily stint of ten pages he found time to wonder how Jane's '*Tales*' were progressing. Published by Boyd such a book would make a fine beginning for her literary career.

'Work, work, my heroine,' he wrote to her. 'There is nothing but toil till we reach the golden summit—and then !—Oh do write to me constantly and *often*. Let no

week pass without writing to me, write all the sense and nonsense that is in your head, but write. We are one heart and soul for ever, and each of us has none but the other to love and look to . . . Love me with all your heart, as I do you . . . Be merry and love me !’

Such a letter was charming to receive, but Jane, hiding it away from her mother’s keen eyes, felt alarmed. Thomas Carlyle’s intentions were unmistakable and he was no traveller selling books, nor mere farmer’s son, or a George Rennie, nor Dr. Fyffe to be put off with a game of battledore and shuttlecock.

Mercurial in temperament Jane wanted—yet did not want. What mischief had she done ? she asked herself. Why, oh why, had this man misunderstood her ? Confronted by an undoubted declaration of eternal love, though an indefinite proposal, Jane took fright. Oh, she must be plain of speech, for etiquette, the restrictions of young ladyhood, reserve of any kind might be fatal—and yet she could not bear the thought of losing altogether this man who was so unlike any other she had known.

‘ My friend, I love you,’ wrote Jane boldly. ‘ I repeat it—oh, I know it is a rash expression, but *were you my brother I would love you just the same !*’ Surely that was sufficiently unequivocal ? Surely even a Thomas Carlyle must realise that a sentiment so calm, so delightful, but so unimpassioned was not enough to reconcile a Jane Welsh to the life of a married woman in a state which carried with it duties and occupations Jane loathed. ‘ I will be your truest friend, but *not* your wife, no, never, never, were you as rich as Croesus or as honoured and renowned as you yet shall be.’

She read her letter carefully. Would the recipient discard her entirely ? The thought was unendurable. What could she say that would bind him to her ? Somehow she

must make it clear that she wrote as she did in anxiety for his peace of mind. At that very moment, so she told herself, she was watching a heart which threatened to break for her sake . . . Carlyle must not suffer in like wise !

'Write and reassure me if you can,' she begged. 'Your friendship is necessary to my existence.'

Wrapped in his plaid the old grey postman jogged down the glen on his old grey pony, and Carlyle read Jane's letter as he struggled with the wind.

'Well, the dream was over. Somehow he must teach himself to honour the wisdom and decision of character Jane had shown in answering his wild epistle. Had he been absurd to speak so freely ? But no, life stripped of all its baseless hopes and beautiful chimeras would scarcely be worth living.

Never, except perhaps for five minutes at a time, had he actually believed that Jane would consent to be his wife, but often and for hours together his fancy had pictured scenes which, were Jane to share them, would have been sheer Heaven ; yet even in such dreaming he had been conscious of a lack which would have made even the blessing of her presence a curse. But like Jane he found the idea of a total break in their relationship intolerable. Somehow the friendship must be re-established and Jane persuaded that she need have no fear of painful consequences as far as he was concerned ; his heart was too old, and made of sterner stuff than to break for the disappointment of hopes that he had had no right to entertain.

'You love me as a sister and will not wed ; I love you in all possible senses of the word and will not wed any more than you. Does this reassure you ?' he wrote. 'I seek no engagement ; I will make none . . . Let me continue writing whatever comes into my head . . . By God's



blessing I will love you with all my heart and all my soul while the blood continues warm within me. I will reverence you. I will help you according to my slender powers . . . Love me for ever on whatever terms you please. Make me the confidant of all your sorrows and joys—find me some means of doing you an essential service, something that will make our relationship more than a pleasing dream when God shall see fit to put an end to it for ever . . . Adieu, my heart's darling !' . . .

Jane read with shining eyes and fast-beating heart, and Thomas Carlyle, working at Goethe on the hillside in the clear Scottish sunshine beside a bonfire of oak branches, thought the world a fair place. What a pity five score years and ten was all man's allotted span.

Every alternate day the old postman brought his mailbags to Kinnard and Thomas Carlyle watched for Jane's letters, which, when they came, were as grateful as dew on the mown grass ; eagerly he set himself to answer them.

Let her tell him everything, remembering always that he was her brother and more than fifty brothers to the end of time. Let her believe, too, that Providence had created them for one another.

' Our souls are linked by the holiest ties,' wrote Carlyle, ' and I am determined to love you more every day I live. My love for you gilds my horizon ; without you all were bleak and sullen ; with you I feel I can stand against innumerable enemies. I trust we shall live to be the highest of earthly blessings to each other . . . God grant it ! . . . Go forward to success, my Princess . . . tire not and your name shall be great upon earth. Despise not small things, remember there was a day when Milton did not know his alphabet . . . Be good, be diligent and fear nothing.'

Jane laughed and sang and danced gaily in the old house

at Haddington, and Carlyle, working at *Wilhelm Meister* with what he described as ‘the ferocity of a hyæna,’ saw his task ending. The Bullers were going south, and for the printing of this book he must be in Edinburgh, from which Haddington was barely sixteen miles distant; he could gallop there every other day on his good horse Bardolph.

It would be the cruellest thing a mother ever did if Mrs. Welsh forbade his coming!

## CHAPTER XI.

### ‘WILHELM MEISTER.’

By train and coach Edward Irving came north to marry Isabelle Martin, to whom he had been engaged for eleven years. Reports of his amazing success preceded his arrival; everyone was reading the ‘*Orations*’ which set out to refute the visions of Shelley and Byron, while pulpits in a dozen churches were at his disposal.

Jane Welsh sat under the returned celebrity when he preached in Haddington the Sunday before his wedding. Watching Irving’s intent face, she wondered how much of his old feeling for her remained; in bitter mood she told herself that since London had absorbed him he had forgotten her, and Thomas Carlyle too, the vaunted friendship was a mere froth of profession. But an hour later Irving entered her mother’s drawing-room with so delightful a plan that the girl vowed she would go out of her wits with joy. In brief, it was that, immediately after the wedding, Isabelle should invite Jane to spend the summer in London—and by some miracle Mrs. Welsh smiled approbation even when she heard that Thomas Carlyle might be a fellow-guest. Indeed, she listened with genuine interest when Irving

expressed faith in his friend, vowing that he had no more doubt of Carlyle's ultimate success than had Noah that the deluge would cease according to the word of the Lord. But London was the school through which Carlyle must pass.

'I have never been so glad before in all my life !' cried Jane, her swift imagination filling in details ; 'it will be the happiest summer imaginable and I think the Almighty Himself must have put the idea into your head,' she told Edward Irving, scarcely listening when he warned her that he had no money and his home would have to be furnished piecemeal.

'A summer in London shall make a new being of me,' Jane promised. 'I'll set myself to perfect my character under your good counsel,' she added, looking up at her tall friend through her long eyelashes. 'I shall be happy—so happy !—and the happy are always disposed to be good, are they not ?'

Relinquishing the conversation to her mother, Jane sat dreaming. She and Thomas Carlyle would be under the same roof, sharing the same occupations and amusements for three long months, with no tedious tasks to perform and no restraint to their happy companionship. In truth, she had done Edward Irving an injustice in thinking, even for a moment, that he was of the type that could forget old friends. She glanced across at him in contrition and even listened to what he was saying—

'Yes, Barry Cornwall—Procter, you know (son-in-law to Mrs. Montague, one of my congregation and a very noble lady)—Procter made a thousand pounds in his first London year and Carlyle has ten times his talent.'

'I wish Mr. Carlyle had finished *The Apprenticeship of Wilhelm Meister*,' interrupted Jane. 'He ought to be work-

ing the precious mines of his own brain rather than drudging for Goethe.'

'That will come,' answered Irving; 'there have been none to reverence him in Scotland. And you? What have you been doing, Child of my Intellect?'

'Not overworking,' admitted Jane. 'As long as professional callers exist, as long as perishable silks and muslins are worn, as long as tea-parties and dinner-parties are in vogue I shall have enough idle business to keep me from too hard study.' She smiled, for her heart was singing—'London!—London!—In London Thomas Carlyle and I will find some better employment than translating *Wilhelm Meister* and an assortment of fairy tales!'

That night Jane looked through her own work in a critical mood. Could she be on the right line when every sentence was detached? She flung the manuscript aside in a passion of despair. Perhaps she was no genius after all but merely a worthless, conceited piece of two-and-twenty fit for no higher destiny than making puddings! But her mood changed swiftly: 'If I'm not a real genius I'm sure I could shine as leader of a *salon*!'

In the early days of his honeymoon Edward Irving found time to lay his London plan before his friend, but the 'rat' was gnawing again, Carlyle was in pessimistic mood, and he failed to make a convert; Jane should go, yes, but for him, Thomas Carlyle, such a project must remain a blessed vision.

'Nonsense, London is the school you need,' argued Irving. 'Believe me, Tom, you have within you powers which yet shall shine out to the confusion of those that now discredit them.'

'You seem to think that were I set down in a London

street, free to converse with such men as Coleridge and De Quincey, some strange development of genius would take place in me,' growled Carlyle. 'I tell you, Ned, help cometh not from the hills or valleys; my own right hand must work my deliverance or I am for ever captive and in bonds.'

'This I believe, friend Thomas,' said Edward Irving, flinging an affectionate arm across the other's shoulder, 'that there will come a time when your deep-seated sense of religion—that high attainment of soul that makes your mother superior to those around her—will yet make her son as superior among the literary men and the rich who are hereafter to company with him.'

Carlyle grunted and shook off the embarrassing arm. It seemed to him, in his morose mood, that if the extraordinary popularity, which Irving mistook for fame, lasted much longer, his friend might well become a kind of theological *braggadocio*, unless the prudence of his wife restrained him, checking the vanity and affectation which had grown up as rankly as other worthier qualities. He glanced at Isabelle sewing swiftly in the lamplight, yet looking up every now and then to cast an adoring glance at the man who was newly her husband.

What would Jane think of Isabelle? She was scarcely a person one could dislike, and yet Carlyle was aware that Jane would not like her. Seen, even under the kindly lamplight, Isabelle was without beauty, and although she might love her husband and possess a knowledge of housewifery, it did not compensate for a complete lack of ideas. As for this Mrs. Montague, of whom Irving talked persistently, Carlyle could imagine her as one of graceful demeanour and generous disposition, possessed of some thousands a year and showing a boundless admiration for

his reverence. Still, such a 'noble lady' might help Jane's development, although it was not conceivable that so fine a type would endure fashionable life for long. Had he not seen that useless class at Kinnard House striving to waste rather than use Time? Small wonder that many were driven to opium and scandal to fill their idle hours. Jane was meant for better things.

'Think it over and let me know how soon you will join us,' urged Irving as he and Carlyle parted; Irving and his wife to return to London and Carlyle to stay for a while in Edinburgh while *Wilhelm* was being printed, and then at Mainhill until such date as the Bullers summoned him to wheresoever they elected to settle.

For the moment Thomas Carlyle was not solitary. John had come to share his lodgings, and while the elder brother wrote doggedly at one end of the cluttered table the younger worked on bones, for Thomas would hear none of John's desire to adopt a literary life. Let him get a profession that would enable him to live; it was galling beyond words to exist on precarious windfalls.

'You're going to be a large, gawkie, broad-faced practiser of physic, ride your own horse about the district, give aloes by rule, and make money, my boy,' he insisted. 'Work, Jack, work, and we two fellows from a nameless spot in Annandale shall yet show the world the pluck that is in the Carlyles.'

Eight years' seniority had its effect. John picked up a thigh-bone and Thomas addressed a batch of *Meister* to Haddington.

Oliver and Boyd had agreed to pay £180 for the first edition, and £250 should a second thousand copies find a market; succeeding editions should be Thomas Carlyle's own property. Of a truth he would have a goodly sum

to supply any need at Mainhill ; the Carlylean creed was that that which belonged to one was to benefit all.

Stuffing a towel into his pocket, the long lean young man padded off for a bathe.

. . . . .

‘ *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship* ’ received a mixed reception at Haddington. Jane brandished the sheets boldly, striving to impress not only her mother but ringleted Grace Welsh, the aunt who had so often infuriated her by insisting that ‘ the gentlemen ’ detested ‘ learned young ladies ’ ; but secretly the girl felt that Goethe was scarcely worthy of his translator.

‘ A hundred and eighty pounds for the first edition only, mamma,’ reiterated Jane. ‘ You see, Mr. Carlyle carries a veritable gold mine in his breast. If I could make a hundred and eighty pounds by my wits it would make me happier than falling heir to a million.’

‘ Don’t be so emphatic, my dear Jane,’ said Aunt Grace, but Mrs. Welsh looked at the printed pages with considerable respect. ‘ I’ll make a nice binding for them out of board and white ribbon,’ she promised. ‘ And you may give Mr. Carlyle my best regards when next you write.’

‘ Oh, mamma ! ’

The girl flitted off to her bedroom, where, for the sake of peace, she was permitted a fire during Grace Welsh’s visits, and made an effort to read the newly arrived sheets. ‘ It’s *queer*,’ she told herself in bewilderment after an hour’s concentration. Why, oh why, had Carlyle not chosen to work on, say, the Maid of Orleans ? She had wept for two days after reading that masterpiece, but could drop no tear for *Wilhelm’s* sorrows.

Wondering whether she would be able to extract a hun-

dred and eighty pence for the 'Tales' she was endeavouring to select and translate, Jane set out her books with the rueful reflection that the programme outlined for her by Thomas Carlyle could scarcely be accomplished under twenty years at her present rate of progress.

'I am snail-ishly slow,' she fumed, and then her eyes fell upon her loaded work-basket wherein lay three pairs of silk stockings waiting to be darned, and two muslin caps to be made. 'Oh, my time, my precious time!' wailed Jane, and fell to planning. Suppose she arose at 7.30 a.m. every day, dashed the sleep out of her eyes with cold water, combed her hair, but refrained from dressing until midday: Knowing her daughter was unfit to be seen, Mrs. Welsh could scarcely send for her to entertain those 'callers by profession' who seemed to spend their lives wasting other people's time.

'I'll do it,' vowed Jane, 'and perhaps, if Mr. Thomas Carlyle can be persuaded not to write "darling" or anything of that sort in his letters—at least in English!—mamma may let him visit Haddington again in the not too distant future.' Really, such a dear, good *patient* genius deserved some reward!

'Miss Geraldine for her geography lesson,' said Betsy's voice at the door.

'Mamma,' said Jane imploringly on her way to the waiting Geraldine, '*may he come?*'

'If you can answer that question I suppose it is quite unnecessary that I should,' replied Mrs. Welsh with dignity.

'Friday till Sunday then—and perhaps a *little* longer!' said Jane, and fled, deaf to her aunt's protesting tirade.

'God grant that they may both be in a better humour before the end of the week!' she prayed, setting the globe whirling before Geraldine's astonished eyes. 'Sometimes



my mother thinks me a very worthless young lady—but she loves me,’ Jane informed her pupil. ‘To our geography, Geraldine !’

## CHAPTER XII.

### *LOST DAYS.*

As Thomas Carlyle crossed the little river Tyne and saw once more the rose-red walls of the old Abbey and the wide main street in which was Jane Welsh’s home, it amazed him to remember how few meetings he had had with this girl who had bewitched him. Strange that he had once been attracted by so different a type as Margaret Gordon !

He loved Jane, of that he was sure, but sometimes he asked himself if he were both mad and selfish in his love. She was worthy to wed the highest in the land, and he was but an obscure mortal facing a perilously uncertain fate ; she dwelt in one of the fairest houses in Haddington, he in a corner of an overcrowded farmhouse alternating with a lodging in a reeking Edinburgh street. Was it dangerous for her to love him ? ‘Woe, woe without end to the man who wrecks the happiness of such a maid,’ said Thomas Carlyle grimly as he passed under the archway and down the outer passage which led to Jane’s door. But with the girl’s slim white hand in his he forgot his forebodings.

‘Oh Jane ! If there were no subjunctive mood and all “ifs” abolished from the world for ever !’

Her black eyes seemed enormous in the pallor of her small face as she gave him greeting. Yes, she had been ill, but his coming had put her headache to flight, so said Jane charmingly, and, drawn by her fragility, he determined

that they must never part ; anything else she willed he would do—but not that. If it were cruel or even sinful to entice her from the sunny places she inhabited, then cruel and wicked he must be.

‘God help us both,’ said Thomas Carlyle soberly.

Mrs. Welsh entered ; Carlyle was scarcely aware of her. Dr. Fyffe appeared, and in the roseate hue of the Haddington drawing-room Carlyle saw him dimly ; he seemed a kindly little creature bearing goodwill to many persons, and with a spirit which swirled about with all the briskness of the freshest can of small beer.

‘Of the genus cricket ; I like all crickets,’ he commented when alone with Jane once more, but Jane was in no mood to discuss a nonentity ; she wanted reassurance as to her own gifts, help and advice ; Carlyle found it difficult to soothe her.

She must not fret herself, he argued. Cowper had published his first book at fifty years of age, and had she forgotten Dr. Johnson ? No one could say that the great lexicographer had not achieved success, yet in old age he had complained that much of his life had been wasted by the pressure of disease, and more trifled away in making provision for the passing day.

‘I should think myself happy could I be sure that even a tenth of my existence would be at my disposal for any purpose above that of the beasts that perish,’ added Carlyle, ‘but for you there is *no* fear if your will is steadfast.’

‘I have done nothing yet,’ said Jane with contrition.

‘Life is short, but not nearly as short as your fancy paints it ; there is time for many failures and many fine achievements.’

‘If only one were not interrupted,’ sighed Jane.

‘Milton fought in the political arena and wrote a Latin

grammar as well as *Paradise Lost*,' Carlyle reminded her, 'and Hooker produced his *Ecclesiastical Polity* amidst gridirons, foul platters and squealing children.'

'I am no glorious Milton,' laughed Jane; 'my lot is far more likely to be the making of puddings.'

'Literature, and literature alone, will make you happy,' returned Carlyle with conviction. 'You shall make immortal food for the souls of generous men in lands and ages that you can never see! Courage, we shall both of us become great in our time, and, though I compose as slowly as a snail, I have not yet given up hope of learning to produce as well as nine-tenths of the "mob of gentlemen who write with ease." Faith and patience, these are literary as well as religious virtues.'

'Faith!' said Jane, suddenly remembering Edward Irving. Had Mr. Carlyle seen that friend's newly published sermons:

'It is a pity he has become such a lion,' answered Carlyle; 'from general report his church is a veritable theatre to which old women flock offering adulation. I wish we saw him safely down, walking as other men walk; methinks our friend has not the head for flattery.'

The London project was in both their minds, but Jane knew that, so far as she was concerned, the suggested visit would never come to pass. Second thoughts had compelled Irving to a halting withdrawal of his impulsive invitation, and he prayed that Jane would understand his motive. Isabelle's tender affection had done much to heal a sorely wounded heart, but, on consideration, he had come to the conclusion that it would be unwise to expose himself to danger during the first months of marriage. Still, he was growing in grace and holiness so hoped that before another year had passed the Eye of his Conscience would permit

him to receive the Child of his Intellect beneath his roof ; Isabelle should write.

Jane had wept tears of disappointment, then flung away her handkerchief vowing that she would never see Edward Irving or Isabelle again—no, not if they begged the favour on their bended knees !

‘ Fewer people love me than you might imagine,’ she now told Thomas Carlyle with seeming inconsequence. ‘ You do ; my mother does ; Mr. Irving does, and one or two more—but *love* is by no means the general sentiment that I inspire.’

Carlyle found it difficult to believe.

The brief visit ended leaving a thousand things unsaid, but Jane returned to her books with enthusiasm and worked herself so ruthlessly that she fell ill.

‘ No more reading for the present,’ said Mrs. Welsh, taking forcible possession of her daughter, and Jane, too weary to resist, was bundled up in blankets and dosed with innumerable drugs. What was she but a mere cumberer of the earth ! How could she earn the laurel wreath Thomas Carlyle had promised :

Poor little Dr. Fyffe’s hand shook as he took his patient’s pulse and vainly tried to amuse her with a serio-comic account of Carlyle’s behaviour at the inn when a groom had tried to give him a spavined horse, but Jane showed herself a termagant and they parted mutually incensed.

Edinburgh seemed an old black harlot of a city when Carlyle returned from Haddington, and he swore that the atmosphere was compounded of coal smoke, gases and more odours than ever chemist or perfumer dreamed. He wanted a pretty white cottage in a Highland glen with clear and quiet waters near by, green lawns, mountains in

the distance, the free sky overhead, books, food, raiment—and liberty to break the heads of all who ventured within a furlong's length, except the select few.

Should he renounce the Buller engagement, which took three-fourths of his precious time, rent a farm in Annandale and set Alick to work it ?

Ill himself, he grew anxious for Jane. Had he overtaxed her strength ? She must go warily and lay Gibbon aside if she found him weighty ; there were limits even to the value of learning. In four years one should be able to acquire all the really valuable and original ideas that could be culled from books ; then came the time for expression.

The printing of '*Wilhelm*' continued while Carlyle wrote 'a fierce preface' and haggled with his publishers. Jane heard details with distaste ; one might as well set a mettled racer to draw a farm cart as involve Thomas Carlyle in pecuniary bargainings.

It was Sunday ; she had been to church twice, and now looked back over the past week, recounting her lost days—a two-hour walk in the mornings and a tea-party every afternoon, for which an extra hour had had to be spent on making a toilette—in all a six-hour reading day gone, all for nothing !

## CHAPTER XIII.

### *CARLYLE BEGINS HIS TRAVELS.*

The Wheel turned, but not in a manner anticipated by Jane Welsh, and at short notice Thomas Carlyle went to London, being summoned by the Bullers, since the three boys were now established in lodgings at Kew Green and needed their tutor.

Hoping for another visit Jane received a Shakespeare and

an admonitory letter. As a first duty she was to read her histories ; as a second to write to Thomas Carlyle ; as a third to love him better every day. ' Be true to me and to yourself, *Herzens Liebling*, and all will be well,' he assured her, but Jane cried out in dismay. How could she show such a letter to her mother ? Mrs. Welsh would be sure to ask for a translation of the German, and might even guess that *Herzens Liebling* meant ' Heart's Darling ' ! Would this extraordinary man never realise that permission to correspond depended upon his appearing as friend, not lover ? Yet the letter pleased her and relieved the tension of her nerves.

The news of the death of Lord Byron at Missolonghi a month before had just reached Haddington ; Jane had learnt of the tragedy when among a laughing group sitting over their teacups, and felt as if the shock could scarcely have been greater had sun or moon dropped from the firmament. Her idol dead—and she had never seen him ! Stricken speechless she sat, white, cold and dejected, while too attentive Dr. Fyffe fluttered about her, her spirit crying to Carlyle, who alone among her group would understand the magnitude of the world's loss.

To Carlyle, then at Mainhill, busy revising his preface and preparing for the momentous journey to England, the news as brought by his father from Ecclefechan Fair seemed incredible.

' Why ? O God, *why* ? ' he asked in bewilderment. When so many sons of mud and clay fill up their base existence to the full, *why* should this, the noblest spirit in Europe, sink before half his course is run ? Like Jane he had dreamed of seeing and even knowing the wonder-poet, and now the curtain of everlasting night covered him from mortal eyes. So thought Carlyle, tramping through the

early hours of a May evening, and lines from *Don Juan* flashed into his mind—

*'What is the end of Fame? 'Tis but to fill  
A certain portion of uncertain paper;  
Some liken it to climbing up a hill,  
Whose summit, like all hills, is lost in vapour;  
For this men write, speak, preach—and soldiers kill.  
And bards burn what they call the 'midnight taper'  
To have—when the original is dust—  
A name, a wretched picture, and worse bust!'*

Such mood endured until he boarded the little smack at Annan that was to carry him away from Scotland; Skiddaw and Helvellyn were white-capped across the Solway. There was a dead calm wind, the vessel remained within sight of the Bass Rock for twenty-four hours and the passengers were the stupidest group imaginable. Carlyle was thankful to enter the Thames and disembark at Tower Wharf; more thankful still to see Edward Irving waving a welcome.

'I feel annihilated in the immensity of the heart of all the earth,' he told his friend, overwhelmed by the tall sooty buildings, the ten thousand times ten thousand sounds, and the never-ending movement and bustle of the great city.

They drove to Islington, where Carlyle was to spend a few days before taking up his duties as tutor. Isabelle welcomed him, obviously proud to play hostess, but remaining a nonentity in Carlyle's eyes, and he scarcely understood Irving's hesitating hints as to the necessity for the coming of his mother-in-law. What puzzled him was why the invitation promised to Jane Welsh had not been pressed long since, and, looking at Irving's friends grouped around the dinner-table, he measured them by Jane's standards. A Mrs. Strachey was there—sister of Mrs. Buller—who with

her rich young cousin, Kitty Kirkpatrick, had furnished Irving's first home in England. Both were pleased to meet the simple-mannered, brown-faced young Scot whose '*Schiller*' they had read; Kitty was a pretty sight in her high-waisted, puff-sleeved frock. Carlyle noticed that she had a merry smile and wore a flower in her curls; he had never seen Jane except in the mourning she habitually wore for her father.

He met Kitty again among the roses at Shooters Hill and at the Basil Montagues in Bedford Square where Irving took him, but he forgot her in the interest of talking to one who had known Byron at Harrow in the days when his loose corduroy trousers were plentifully sprinkled with ink and his finger-nails bitten to the quick. Seeing the other's enthusiasm, Montague gave him a scrap from one of Byron's letters and Carlyle folded it carefully for Jane before Mrs. Montague claimed his attention. She proved to be beautiful as well as stately, quick of intellect, and so passionate an admirer of Irving's that she opened both heart and house to his friends. Soon, the two found a bond of interest, for as a girl she had walked through the streets of Dumfries with Carlyle's first hero Robbie Burns, and he could tell her his father's tales of the poet—how once when a smuggling brig was caught on the shoals in the Solway, Exciseman Burns had led a boarding party sword in hand—and how he had written 'A Man's a Man for a' That' after his admonishment by his superior officer, on the ground that he had refused to uncover one night in Dumfries theatre when 'God Save the King' was sung, so proving himself to be 'a person disaffected to the Government.'

A hand on his arm checked his eloquence. 'My son-in-law, Bryan Procter, "Barry Cornwall,"' said Mrs. Montague with a smile, and Carlyle looked up to see a



slender, palish-looking little man being pressed to recite his famous poem 'The Journal of the Sun'—

*'Day breaks! O'er yon bars of deep purple,  
(Cloud purple) comes soaring the Dawn  
O'er mountains that lift their black shoulders  
'Twixt Night and Morn . . .*

*Below all the waters are sparkling  
All earth is awake.  
The lark in the ether is singing  
All earth is awake!'*

'He does his best work when in a crowd,' whispered Mrs. Montague, 'walking in London, for instance. I have known him run into a shop to secure his verses and bring them away on some crumpled scrap of paper in which cheese or sugar had been wrapped.' She turned aside, but Carlyle was scarcely aware of her departure, for Thomas Campbell was announced. He had loved the man's poems—would he love the man? But could this literary dandy in blue frock-coat and trousers with eye-glass and wig be the author of 'Lord Ullin's Daughter,' 'Ye Mariners of England' and 'The Pleasures of Hope' that had brought its author fame at twenty-one?

Carlyle watched him as he bowed before Mrs. Montague, and thought that the smirk on the little man's face would befit a shopman or an auctioneer.

When Irving brought the two together and Campbell patronisingly promised Carlyle an invitation to a literary *déjeuner* of uncertain date, Carlyle's reply was brusque, and Irving looked at his friend in dismay.

Campbell, editor of the *New Monthly* as well as poet, was important. Relinquishing him to Mrs. Montague and Isabelle, Irving drew Carlyle aside, but his hints fell on barren soil.

‘I would have loved the fellow,’ insisted the obstinate Scot, ‘but look at him—he might be a little Edinburgh advocate with a heart as dry as a Greenock kipper—listen to him, his head is a shop, not a manufactory. He has no living well of thought or feeling in him.’ Jane would be contemptuous of such a shallow pate, Carlyle was sure—then his expression changed and he looked round puzzled. ‘The Annandale accent—who is it?’

‘Allan Cunningham, poet and stone-mason,’ answered Irving; ‘to hear him one would think he had never crossed the border.’ He beckoned to the new-comer, who extended the hand of good fellowship to Carlyle, and presently the pair withdrew into a corner. It was good to find someone modest, kind and smiling in this bedlam of a city, a man who was a genius of no common make, yet who seemed not to know he was anything but a reading mason! Even Jane was forgotten for an hour, but that night when lying wakefully aware of the surge of London, Carlyle pictured her as the hostess of a *salon* to which all literary men should crave admission.

Some day, too, he must show her St. Paul’s in all its grandeur, as he had seen it that morning when hurrying west along Cheapside into Newgate Street with its columns and friezes and massy wings of bleached yet unworn stone, with its statues and its graves around it; with its solemn dome four hundred feet above and its gilded ball and cross gleaming in the sun. Gigantic, beautiful and enduring, it seemed to transmit the sounds of Death, Judgment and Eternity through all the frivolous and fluctuating city.

What was Jane doing? Was she well and happy? Why was Irving dilatory in pressing for her coming? Carlyle’s mind was still unsatisfied on this point when he left Islington

to join Charles Buller in his lodgings on Kew Green—a pleasant and convenient location, it seemed, with coaches carrying passengers running to London every half-hour for the modest sum of one shilling.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### ‘PLEBEIAN ENGLISH.’

Jane’s head ached. She had packed and sewed alternately from seven o’clock in the morning till midnight on the previous day, for, at twenty-four hours’ notice, another round of visits was to begin. She was rebellious and miserable and her heart cried out for letters ; men were unreliable mortals, even the best of them. Thomas Carlyle and Edward Irving alike seemed to have forgotten her ; only Dr. Fyffe was constant ! Jane gave a watery smile at the thought of the spruce white hat in which the gunpowdery little man, once so slovenly in appearance, had returned from his last expedition to Edinburgh—all for her sake, she felt sure.

‘The postman’s knock !’ Jane flew up as her mother entered. ‘Is it for me ?’

‘You may be sure of *that*,’ said Mrs. Welsh, handing her daughter a packet, ‘and I only hope it will cure your headache.’

‘I have no doubt it will help,’ answered Jane indignantly, trusting, as she broke the seal, that the missive would contain no embarrassing endearments, at least in English.

‘Drink your tea first,’ ordered Mrs. Welsh, noting her daughter’s flushed cheeks.

‘My tea—as if that mattered !’ sighed Jane, but she obeyed.

'You gulp it down as if it were senna,' complained Mrs. Welsh, taking the empty cup. 'Yes, Betty ?—I'm coming.'

'Thank the Lord for that,' muttered Jane, sinking back upon her cushions as her mother left the room, and she was free to touch with reverent fingers the scrap of Byron's handwriting which Carlyle had enclosed, free, too, to devise a diplomatic translation of '*Ich kusse dich zehntausenmal.*'

The succeeding months were difficult for Jane. So intense was her desire to enter the charmed London circles wherein Carlyle was a-venturing that his letters gave her more unhappiness than pleasure. Now, he had visited Charles Lamb—curious that the little fellow had won reputation as a humorist when, in truth, he possessed only a thin streak of cockney wit : now, Crabb Robinson, who knew Schiller and had read with Goethe, had invited him to his chambers.

For the first time in his life Carlyle was being accepted as a literary lion, though a small one. People read his writings—various editors hinted at further translations, and *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* appeared in three volumes. It was pleasant to be patted on the back and told that he was 'a clever fellow.'

When the Bullers decided to spend a year in Boulogne, Carlyle hesitated ; he was tired of the fashionable females who flooded their drawing-room in silk attire but with hearts like kippers. The world must be fronted some time, soon was as good as syne ; but his savings were meagre.

Reviews began to appear. *Blackwood* congratulated the translator of *Wilhelm Meister* on his very promising début and excellent use of language : 'he has a perfect knowledge of German and writes better English than is at all common . . . we know no exercise more likely to produce effects

of permanent advantage upon a young mind of intellectual ambition.' The *Monthly Review* was as laudatory, but the *London Magazine* had given the work into the hands of De Quincey, who discoursed on it at length in two successive issues. Carlyle heard of the attack and decided to read it some time, since there might be grass among the chaff, but Goethe was the moon and the barking of penny dogs a matter of small concern.

Of more immediate moment was the state of his own stomach. Mrs. Montague had introduced him to one John Badams, who promised to cure his dyspepsia, and presently Carlyle found himself coaching up to Birmingham at amazing speed to undergo treatment. Twelve hours only were spent on the journey and the ostlers took but ninety seconds changing the post-horses.

But Jane Welsh secured copies of the *London Magazine*, carried them into her sanctum and turned over the pages with eager fingers :

‘ Good English Reader—you that are proud  
to speak the tongue  
Which Shakespeare spoke ; the faith and  
morals hold  
Which Milton held . . . ’

She read on bewildered. The writer spoke of ‘ spurious admiration,’ depraved sensibilities and the importance of sanity and good taste in literature—

‘ Never were these qualities more energetically demanded than in the case which we now bring before our readers ; a case not merely of infatuation but of infatuation degrading to literature beyond anything which is on record in the history of human laxity. . . . Not the baseness of Egyptian superstition, not Titania under enchantment, not Caliban in drunkenness, ever shaped to themselves an idol

more weak or hollow than modern Germany has set up for worship in the person of Goethe. The gods of Germany are too generally false gods, but among false gods some are more false than others.' . . .

Jane turned to another column.

' . . . the ultimate point we aim at is not to quarrel with the particular book which has been the accidental occasion of bringing Goethe before us ; a bad book more or less is of no great importance . . . '

. . . "Goethe," says the translator, "is by many of his countrymen ranked by the side of Homer and Shakespeare" . . . If this judgment has indeed been uttered it would well deserve to be put on record as an example of the atrocities that can be tolerated when once all reverence for great names is shaken off . . . '

Jane's shocked eyes scanned succeeding pages.

' Provincialisms . . . Scotticisms . . . "wage for wages," a vulgarism which is not used in England even by respectable servants . . . "Licking his lips," plebeian English from the sewers and kennels . . . "discussing oysters," English of that sort called slang. . . . Of all plebeianisms, however, the most shocking is the use of the word "*thrash*" as used in the following passage—"His father was convinced that the minds of children should be kept awake and steadfast by no other means than blows, hence . . . used to *thrash* him at stated periods." In whatever way men will allow themselves to talk among men, and when intimate acquaintance relaxes the restraints of decorum, every gentleman abjures any coarse language which he may have learnt at school or elsewhere under two circumstances—in the presence of strangers and in the presence of women . . . now an author is to be presumed always in the presence of both and ought to allow himself no expressions but such as he would judge consistent with his own self-respect in a miscellaneous company of good breeding and of both sexes. . . .

‘These instances are sufficient to illustrate the coarseness of diction which disfigures the English translation and which must have arisen from want of sufficient intercourse with society. One winter of residence in the metropolis either of England or Scotland . . . would enable the translator to weed his book of these deformities which must be peculiarly offensive in the quarters which naturally he must wish to conciliate ; first the readers, secondly to Mr. Goethe—who besides that he is Mr. von Goethe is naturally anxious to appear before foreigners in a dress suitable to his pretensions as a man of quality . . . would be more shocked than perhaps a philosopher ought to be if he were to be told that his *Wilhelm Meister* spoke an English anyway underbred.’

Jane could read no more. ‘Underbred’ . . . ‘provincialisms’ . . . ‘a bad book more or less is of no great importance’ . . . And she had bound the sheets in the cover made by her mother and tied them up with white ribbons ! Was her ‘genius’ no genius after all but just an uncouth, plebeian Scot with a fine flow of words ? What would he say to her when next he wrote ? She watched post after post, for Carlyle returned from Birmingham and found himself unaccountably included in a party assembled at Dover, which comprised the Irvings with their baby (born during Carlyle’s absence), the Stracheys and Kitty Kirkpatrick.

He looked on sardonically while the women fluttered round the child’s cradle and Edward Irving performed the part of dry-nurse. If the thing had been the Infant Llama it could not have been treated with more ceremony, and when tall, sallow-visaged Irving carried the pepper-box of a creature in his folded palms, tickled it, dangled it, grinning every time it stirred, Carlyle found it a noxious sight.

Even when the intruder slept he contrived to dominate

the conversation and Irving would break off a metaphysical discussion to offer advice to the young mother.

'I think I would wash him in *warm* water to-night, Isabelle.'

'Yes, dear,' Isabelle answered, with her mouth full of safety-pins.

Kitty Kirkpatrick tossed her auburn curls and laughed as Carlyle snorted, crying out that the matter of bathing the baby was Isabelle's affair, not Irving's. 'Were I in her place I would wash "him" with oil of vitriol if I pleased and take no one's advice.'

Isabelle's face quivered as she gathered up the infant, Irving cast a look of dignified remonstrance at his old friend, and Kitty cast a bombshell by the sudden planning of a continental tour in which the Stracheys and Carlyle should be her guests.

How it came to pass Carlyle never knew, but a few days later he found himself on the way to Paris, sharing a dickey with Strachey, Kitty and her maid being inside the carriage.

Jane, now at Templand, now in Haddington, held her head high. What an *ugly* name was Kitty Kirkpatrick. Oh no, she was not jealous, but Mr. Carlyle must not mention the word 'Kirkpatrick' again, and if he were enjoying a thousand pleasures—seeing Parisian life in cafés, theatres and *en promenade*, watching Charles X returned from exile and visiting the Morgue—she too was gay. The Devil had tempted her to attend Musselburgh Races on horseback, and she had found herself the cynosure of all eyes. Indeed, a young man from Sutherlandshire had fallen in love with her, although she had never even lifted her veil. He had dogged her back to Haddington, bringing a boarding-school sister who needed instruction—and a proposal!



Poor, dear Dugald ! Jane drew a woeful picture of the infatuated youth for Thomas Carlyle's edification ; he had fair, silky locks, a voice like music and a sensitive heart. By the way, had Mr. Carlyle improved his infamous accent or did he still speak Annandale ? She wished her friend could contrive to be, if not as elegant as eighteen-year-old Dugald, at least as fascinating as a Colonel in the Guards who had held an umbrella over her untiringly on a fourteen-hour-long journey from Glasgow to Fort William. Better still, let him pattern himself upon a newly discovered 'Cousin Baillie,' a graceful, noble-figured man with the handsomest countenance imaginable and lacking only genius to be Jane's beau-ideal.

Thomas Carlyle was sorry for the moths fluttering around Jane's candle. It must hurt her to be the cause of pain to so many, but he saw no remedy where she was concerned. All she could do was to show a pretty mixture of mercy, gracefulness and female cunning. What worried him at the moment was the discovery that the German tale upon which he believed Jane to have been working had already appeared in translation ; she must turn to something else.

The Paris adventure was over. With Kitty, Carlyle had gone shopping in the Palais Royal, purchasing a needle-case a-piece for each of his four sisters, a Molière for Jane and something for Mrs. Welsh, and now he was back in England, established in Pentonville lodgings and free to carry out Dr. Badams' régime ; the tour had been a sad interruption to work, and French cooking had sorely disarranged his stomach. A fortnight in Paris *might* be looked upon as a treat, he decided, but it would be martyrdom to live there. French houses were not homes but buildings wherein people slept and dressed, every apartment being

tricked out with mirrors—and the noise in the streets had been deafening.

He stretched his legs under a solid English table with relief, and addressed himself to the augmentation of his *Schiller* to fit it for book publication, for which he had been offered fifty pounds. Here was a heaven-sent opportunity for Jane to make her first appearance in print. Let her translate the *Alpenlied*, or the scene between Posa and Philip in *Don Carlos* or anything she liked.

'Think,' he urged, 'would it not be pretty to have your little casket locked up and begirt on every side by the masses of my coarse stoneware and with "J. W." as signature?' Let her not trouble about correctness, for what was his use if not to help her forward? 'There is not another soul alive that wishes with such earnestness to see you good and perfect, the lovely, graceful, wise and dignified woman it is in your power to be; I hope from you more than I will trust to words,' ended Carlyle.

But Jane was still at Templand in a crowded house, getting up late in the mornings, going to bed late; required to spend hours at the piano, or playing chess and *écarté*; all she could promise was that she would attempt the translation of 'Hero and Leander' as soon as she could persuade her mother to return home.

Carlyle, struggling with his own work, saw her as a pathetic little Mignon longing for the heavenly things which the coarse world would not let her know, and he implored Fate to give him power to help her in the unequal contest; so far he had done nothing but love her.

Why wouldn't she come to England? She should be sufficiently comfortable with the Irvings for a month or so, although she might find herself compelled to pay some attention to the infant.

But Jane had no illusions left and felt sure that Isabelle would always find some gentle excuse for withholding any invitation her old friend might wish to send. 'The recovery of a faithless lover was a benefit for which one woman was not likely to be grateful to another,' said Jane oracularly, but Mr. Carlyle might kiss the baby for her, although she would not do it herself for a fee of five guineas !

. . . 'Will the wish of my heart ever be fulfilled ? I want a sweet home in some romantic vale with sufficient money for comfort, and *One* to be the polar star of my being—one warm-hearted, dearest Friend whose sublime genius would shed an ennobling influence on all around him.'

Tired of writing, Jane dropped her pen, and snatching up a sheet of white paper and a pair of scissors, cut now a portrait of Carlyle in profile, now a caricature of Edward Irving singing a lullaby to his baby, and now a tiny paper heart. Her eyes began to dance as she contemplated her handiwork.

*(To be continued.)*

## ON THE FIRST SUNLIGHT OF MARCH.

‘ this ecstasy of God,  
That we call spring-time in an English wood.’  
‘ Magic’  
GORELL.

Now, on this first and ever-blessed time,  
When the once wintry clime  
Relenting, for a moment smiles with light,  
A gradual pallor dawns from tree to tree,  
Till, suddenly  
With the new sun both trunk and bough are bright.

No flowers are yet ;  
Only the celandine  
Doth lift her visage wet  
To bless the month, and shine

With her own light, which needs not light of sun,  
But looks exultingly,  
While all the flooded fields with water run,  
And winds blow coldly by.

Now on the dripping orchards glows the light  
With such a strange and gold translucency,  
As only Spring can compass ; not the bright  
Imperial Summer knows,  
For all her pomps and shows,  
Such panoply

*As this cold day of March, when only light  
Doth live, and yet enfold,  
Implicit in his shining, all the bright  
And blossom'd shapes, which the unconscious year,  
Fast sleeping here,  
Invisibly and perfectly doth hold.*

ANTHONY FFETTYPLACE.

### TO LET.

*Empty, echoing space, bare dusty walls  
With pale, faint squares of light where pictures hung ;  
Uncurtained windows staring like weary eyes  
Into the coming night ;  
Carpetless floors that creak like stealthy feet  
Stealing from room to room.*

*Companioned now by ghosts of bygone years,  
Lonely and wondering what the days will bring,  
The house stands brooding on its memories  
And sees again the firelight rise and fall,  
Lighting the peopled room, the cheerful walls,  
The friendly backs of old, familiar books  
And feels again the comfortable warmth  
• Creep through its aching bones.*

*Then with a start it wakes and, shivering, stands,  
Wondering what the days will bring.*

DAVID B. CUNNINGHAM.

Toronto.

## QUEEN CAROLINE.

### A PRIVATE DIARY

BY CHRISTOPHER HOBHOUSE.

*Henry Hobhouse, my great-grandfather, was permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Home Office from 1817 to 1827. He was a most capable, cautious and conscientious civil servant, who enjoyed the full confidence of Lord Liverpool and was a right-hand man to his immediate superior, Lord Sidmouth.*

*One of the principal anxieties of his department was the behaviour of the Prince Regent's wife, who was in 1820 still roaming the Continent in very curious company: and Hobhouse well knew that the accession of George the Fourth was bound to precipitate a crisis between the new monarch and his queen, and a crisis into which the permanent head of the Home Office must reluctantly be dragged. Accordingly, one of his first actions upon learning of the death of George the Third was to start keeping a diary, rather in the spirit in which Pepys kept his diary, for his protection as much as for his edification. He began on January 31st, 1820, setting down his accurate and careful impressions upon the gilt-edged foolscap of his office, and binding them up later on into a volume marked 'Papers relating to Queen Caroline, 1820.'*

King George the 3rd departed this life on Saturday Afternoon 29 Jan. at 35<sup>m</sup> past 8 at Windsor Castle. He died without the least suffering, and without any lucid Interval. About 3 hours before his death he told his Page that, if he did not raise his Head, he should die; but the Physicians in attendance considered this Expression merely as indicating a strong Wish for having his Head raised and not as conveying

any consciousness of his actual State. Thirteen days before his death, during the very hard Frost, being in Bed, he drew himself up in his Bedclothes, and said 'Tom's a cold.' But it is extremely uncertain, whether this Allusion proceeded from a Glimpse of Understanding : probably it did not.

So strong was the *vis vitæ*, that he continued to breathe for several Hours after his Hands and Feet became Black. He had never had a lucid Interval from the latter End of Oct. 1810. About Apr. 1812 he became so much better that he wd impose the Belief of his Sanity on those who were not constantly with him, but his regular Attendants saw that his Mind was never free from Delusion. When he was told of the Assassination of Mr Perceval, he said 'O yes, I know that. I ordered him to be hanged for keeping me in Confinement.'

The King's Strength had been gradually declining since the Month of Nov. last, but no Apprehension of an early Dissolution was entertained until within ten days, during which Period he failed rapidly ; and so little was his Death expected on Saturday, that all the Cabinet Ministers, except the Lord Chancellor, were out of Town, when the News arrived.

*In the course of Sunday morning most of the Cabinet arrived at the Home Office ; all the Privy Councillors in London were summoned by messages to meet at two o'clock. After ordering a proclamation on the following day, the Council were introduced to the new King, who read a Declaration prepared by Lord Liverpool. Although it was a Sunday, both Houses of Parliament assembled, only to find that the absence of the Lord Steward at Brighton made it impossible for the peers to be sworn or for the Speaker to take the chair.*

*The new King was ill of a fever all this while. On the Monday he was relieved of a further fifty ounces of blood, on top*

*of eighty ounces of which he had been bled the week before. As a result he was too feeble to hold a Council until Saturday, the 12th of February,*

which Measure was necessary for pricking the Sheriffs, and for receiving the King's Declaration in regard to the Alteration of the Liturgy. The latter Point has been very much under the consideration of the Cabinet, as involving the question of the proper arrangements to be made respecting the Queen. The King has been long most anxious for a Divorce, not (as it is imagined) from an Intention of marrying again, but from the desire of getting rid of a Wife, whom he loaths. It is well known that in 1806 a Commission of Enquiry under the Privy Seal was issued to Lord Erskine then Chancellor, Ld. Ellenborough then Chief Justice of the K.B., Ld. Grenville then first Lord of the Treasury, and Ld. Spencer the Secy of State for the Home Department. Their Enquiry proved a great Degree of Levity and Indiscretion, but no Criminality. Nothing was done upon it. And the Change of Administration, which shortly afterwards took place, threw the Government into the Hands of those, who were at that Time convinced of the Princess of Wales's Innocence. Two at least of these Persons, viz. Lord Liverpool and Lord Eldon now admit, that their Information subsequently acquired has convinced them that the Princess's criminality had commenced before that Period. Of her subsequent Guilt there is no doubt. Some have supposed that the true cause of the Regent's not changing the King's Ministers at the commencement of the Regency, was his Expectation that a Divorce would be facilitated by retaining them. He knew that the principal Leaders of the Opposition were satisfied of the Princess's Infidelity. And it was not surprizing that he should calculate on the retaining of Mr.



Perceval as the most likely means of convincing him of the same Truth. However that may have been, it is certain that since the Princess went to reside abroad in 1814 great Pains have been taken to collect Proofs of her Guilt. The Endeavours of the British and Hanoverian Ministers in Austria and Italy not having been very successful, notwithstanding the Notoriety of her Adultery, Mr. Cooke, a retired King's Counsel, was despatched to Italy in the summer of 1818 for the purpose of collecting Evidence. After some Months' residence there, he returned to England about May last with the Results of his Enquiries. The Proofs thus collected, being submitted to the Cabinet, were not satisfactory ; but they advised the Prince Regent to consult the Law Officers of the Crown and those of the Duchy of Cornwall, assuming that the Evidence were satisfactory as to the Princess's Guilt, on the Expediency or Inexpediency of three Modes of proceeding, which had been suggested, viz. 1. The Trial of the Princess for High Treason committed abroad. 2. A Proceeding for Adultery in the ecclesiastical Court, to be followed by a Bill of Divorce. 3. A Proceeding in Parl<sup>t</sup> in the first Instance ; and whether any other course of proceeding could be recommended in Preference.

In the last Month the King's Advocate and the Attorney and Solicitor General (Note in text : ' Sir Cha<sup>s</sup> Robinson Sir Rob<sup>t</sup> Giffard Sir John S. Copley ') made their report, in which they came to the Conclusion that a Queen Consort, or the Wife of a King's eldest Son, committing Adultery within the Realm or with a British Subject, is guilty of High Treason within the Stat. 25 Edw. III stat. 5. cap. 2., as aider and abettor of the Adulterer, who is within the express Words of that Act. But that if the Adultery is committed out of the Realm with a Foreigner, she is not guilty of High Treason, because it is no Treason in him, and

therefore can not be in his Abettors. They further reported their Opinion that the Prince might institute a Suit in the eccles<sup>l</sup> Court, but that, as such a proceeding would be a private Suit, it was not applicable to a case standing upon public Grounds alone. On the last Point they thought that tho' in ordinary cases Parl<sup>t</sup> requires that previously to the entertaining of a Bill of Divorce, a Verdict should have been obtained against the Adulterer, and a Divorce *a mensa et thoro* decreed by the eccles<sup>l</sup> Court, yet from the public Nature Character and Consequences of the proposed Proceeding, an adherence to the usual rule would not be considered necessary : but that in the course of such a proceeding the Evidence to make out the Charge must be strictly examined, and an opportunity given to the Princess of controverting that Evidence, and of establishing her Innocence. The latter of the three modes of proceeding they therefore thought liable to the least objection, and they could not recommend any other preferable Course.

. . . . .

Before the King's Death the Prince Regent had intimated to some of the Cabinet his Opinion in favour of a Bill of Divorce, and hinted that he knew the Sentiments of some of the Opposition Members (particularly Ld. Holland Ld. Essex and Mr. Tierney) to be, that such a Bill might be successfully proposed.

Thus circumstanced the Cabinet came to the consideration of the question, whether the Queen should be named in the Liturgy, knowing at the same time the Anxiety felt by the King on the subject, and that his Recovery was probably retarded by the Sleeplessness produced by that Anxiety.

*The Cabinet were agreed on the propriety of excluding the Queen's name : but some difficulty was caused by the attitude*

*of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who took the line that he had not sufficient material to justify him in recommending any alteration, though he would acquiesce in it. Meanwhile, Canning had persuaded the Cabinet that the question of the liturgy had better be postponed till a decision had been reached on the question of the divorce.*

This . . . necessarily brought into Discussion all the Objections to a Bill of Divorce, the chief of which were the Impossibility of carrying such a Measure without a Parliamentary Enquiry into the Truth of the Charges on which the Bill would proceed, the great Scandal and public Mischief of such an Enquiry, the extrême difficulty of excluding Evidence of Recrimination on such an Enquiry, and the Impossibility of excluding Recrimination in the Debate, which might prove of even worse consequences than admitting it in Evidence. The Cabinet were therefore unanimous against a Bill of Divorce ; and finally drew up a Minute stating the Grounds, on which they offered to the King their Advice to forego such a Measure, and to be content with an Enactment that the Queen should be debarred of her Privileges as a Queen Consort, and that such Provision as should be made for her should depend on her remaining abroad.

Before this Paper was delivered to the King, His Majesty sent a Message to the Lord Chancellor by Sir J. Leach . . . , insisting on a Divorce as the Condition of his retaining his confidential Servants. (Note in Text : ‘The King expressed his Determ<sup>n</sup> to retire to Hanover, if he could not obtain a Divorce in England.’) Lord Liverpool on Friday delivered to His Majesty the Minute of Cabinet, and received his Pleasure to see the Lord Chancellor Ld Liverpool and Ld Sidmouth after the Council on this Day. At this audience

the King delivered to the three Ministers a Paper containing some Observations on the Cabinet Minute, probably drawn by Sir J. Leach ; and with every Expression of Confidence in them and Cordiality towards them insisted upon a Divorce as a *sine qua non* . . . He added that he considered a Divorce a Point of Honour, from which he could not creditably depart ; that he had as high a sense of Honour as the late King, who, with reference to the Catholic Question, had said that he might be driven to live in a Cottage, but could not be driven to consent to that, from which his Conscience revolted ; and that he applied this equally to both the Points, viz. the Catholic Question, and the Divorce.

*Monday, Feb. 14.* Sir B. Bloomfield, having probably perceived in the King some Disposition to yield to the Advice of his Cabinet, took an Opportunity of suggesting that their Reply should be delayed, and that it should contain some conciliatory Expressions. And having learnt that Prince Metternich the Austrian Minister had with reference to this subject remarked that crowned Heads could bear Crime better than Slander, suggested that Lord Castlereagh should have an Audience, which he accordingly had. This Audience lasted for 5 Hours, for the first three of w<sup>ch</sup> the King delivered a Speech, w<sup>ch</sup> appeared to have been intended for the 3 Ministers who were with the King on Saturday, but the King was then probably too much fatigued to deliver it. L<sup>d</sup> C then went thro' the recriminatory Matter likely to be urged against the King, and particularised the connexion with his several Mistresses from Mrs. Fitzherbert downwards. He left the King in a subdued tone of Mind.

L<sup>d</sup> C apologized to the King for having discussed with him Matters, which were more fit for deliberation with the Prime Minister. The King said it was impossible for him to hold such a Discussion with L<sup>d</sup> Liverpool, so deficient

is he both in manner and Temper. He added that he always conversed with pleasure with L<sup>d</sup> C L<sup>d</sup> Eldon and L<sup>d</sup> Sidmouth, and reposed the greatest Confidence in them.

*Sir John Leach, who was instigating the King to reject his Cabinet's advice, was suspected of a design upon the Woolsack, and may have been in touch with the Opposition leaders. But it was certain 'notwithstanding Rumours to the contrary' that the King had not seen them, and apparently he 'had no serious Intention of changing his Ministers, but threw out a Hint of this kind with a View of furthering his other Object.' He would have been glad, none the less, to be rid of Liverpool and Canning.*

Feb. 19. The King is now perfectly satisfied with the Decision of the Cabinet respecting the Queen. This satisfaction has probably arisen in part from his own Reflexions and in part from learning that the Sentiments of Lord Lansdowne and some other leading Members of the Opposition coincide on this subject with those of the Cabinet.

Lord Liverpool has had an Interview with Mr. Brougham, who admits that he is to be appointed Atty Gen<sup>l</sup> to the Queen. He signified his Acquiescence in the Alteration of the Liturgy, and expressed his Opinion that no just Exception could be taken to the Omission of the Queen's Name, that of the Duke of York not having been inserted, which had been proposed by the King. Mr. B said he should advise the Queen to remain abroad, but that she was a Woman of such strong passions he could not answer for her following his Advice. He also promised, if she came to some part of the Continent near England, to go over to her.

The Chief Baron of Scotland, Sir Sam<sup>l</sup> Shepherd, tells me that, when he was Sol<sup>r</sup> Gen<sup>l</sup> of the Duchy of Cornwall, he had a conversation with the Prince Regent on the subject of a Divorce, in which he stated that there were great

difficulties in the way of such a Measure. The Prince asked him whether any one of the King's subjects could not obtain a Divorce upon similar Grounds. He answered that a Subject probably might. 'Then,' said the Prince, 'I am in a worse Situation than any of my Father's Subjects.' Shepherd replied that it was a Sacrifice, which Persons in the highest Stations were sometimes called on to make.

*These disputes were rudely interrupted by the discovery of the Cato Street conspiracy, and during March, Hobhouse was mostly occupied with the constitutional issues involved in the prosecution of Thistlewood and his associates. On April the 20th the King returned to London 'much improved in Health, but with a Mind enervated by boyish Dalliance with the Marchioness of Conyngham, who has for the last few Months superseded the March<sup>ss</sup> of Hertford as the Object of his Attention.' In the meantime, awkward discussions had been taking place relating to the new Civil List, and the ministers expected trouble. An interview between the King and Liverpool very nearly ended in the resignation of the latter, and Sidmouth was sent to soothe the royal feelings. In the end the King's Speech on April the 27th embodied the Cabinet's terms, but relations were still difficult.*

A Shyness also subsists between the King and the L<sup>d</sup> Chancellor, arising out of the following Circumstances. The Queen, having appointed Mr. Brougham and Mr. Denman her Atty and Sol<sup>r</sup> Gen<sup>l</sup>, the former (who in his Movements upon this Subject is probably more actuated by a View to his own personal Ambition than by any other Motive) applied to be made a King's Counsel, intimating that if he obtained this Rank, he should be under no Necessity of using his Appointment from the Queen. Lord Liverpool was disposed to yield to his Application, to w<sup>ch</sup> the

Chancellor objected, on the ground that the Situation of Mr. B in the Profession gave him no Pretensions to expect a silk Gown, and that his Acceptance of the Appointment from the Queen gave him no Right to ask a Favour of the King. Last week however L<sup>d</sup> Eldon received from Sir J. Leach (who had probably been persuaded by Mr B to advise H.M. to this effect) a Message commanding the Chancellor to grant to Mr. B. and Mr. D. the Precedency, of w<sup>ch</sup> they were ambitious. The Chancellor was highly offended both by the Substance and the Channel of this Communication, has not obeyed the Command, and has not since been at Carlton House.

*Hobhouse's description of the circumstances of the Queen's return to England, and of the negotiations that preceded it, does not greatly differ from several published accounts, and shows no sign of special information. She entered London, with the ridiculous Alderman Wood, on June the 6th. Next day, it was proposed in both Houses to set up a Committee of Secrecy to examine the ' Documents containing the Evidence of the Queen's Misconduct since she went abroad in 1814.' ' In the Commons, after considerable Debate, an Adjournment was moved and carried for the Purpose of trying whether the Differences between the King and Queen could not be adjusted by Negotiation.'*

Monday, June 19. After the Interchange of several Notes between Her Majesty and Lord Liverpool, the former proposed that the Negotiation should be carried on by persons of high Station and Character on each side. This Proposal being acquiesced, the Duke of Wellington and Lord Castlereagh were named by the King, but the Queen was unable to find any Negotiators on her part answering the Description she herself suggested . . .

*Brougham and Denman therefore acted for her, but the Negotiations broke down on the Queen's insistence on her inclusion in*

*the liturgy. The Government, meantime, were seriously agitated by signs of insubordination among the Guards at Charing Cross Barracks.*

The effect upon the King of the Queen's arrival was to raise his Spirits by renewing the Hope of its leading to a public Enquiry, for which he has always been solicitous. He was of course displeased with the Proposal of a Secret Committee, and when Lord Liverpool and the Duke of Wellington went to him in Bed on the Night of the 7th to communicate the course the Debate had taken in the Commons, he was extremely angry with them, behaved very rudely to the former, and when the Duke interposed an Observation, commanded him to hold his Tongue.

*In this same debate, Canning, having previously warned his colleagues that 'his former Intimacy with the Queen might render it necessary for him to take a Line of his own,' referred to his unabated Esteem and respect for her. The King, greatly offended by this, 'intimated to Lord Liverpool some Expectation that Canning should resign,' to which Liverpool retorted that his own resignation would follow. On the 12th, the King 'pressed Lord Sidmouth very strongly to accept the Premiership, which he peremptorily declined'—refusing at the same time to discuss the probability of the Duke of Wellington accepting. A week later, Sidmouth had another even less agreeable audience.*

The King, having been yesterday cheered in going to the Chapel Royal, was exceedingly elated, and was led by the Sycophants around him to believe in his own Popularity. The Cabinet thought it highly necessary . . . that the King should be undeceived in this Point, and deputed Lord Sidmouth to wait on His Majesty for this purpose. His L<sup>d</sup> had an Audience this morning, which lasted for 1 $\frac{3}{4}$  Hours,



and completely answered the Object. In fine the King thanked L<sup>d</sup> S. for his Candour in reporting to him the Truth.

*Monday, June 26.* Mr. Canning yesterday had another long Audience of the King, in which he tendered his Resignation, owning his Belief in the Truth of all the Evidence laid before Parl<sup>t</sup> respecting the Queen's Misconduct, but declaring that Circumstances existed which must preclude him from taking an active part against Her Majesty. The King believes, and probably with great Reason, that C's Intimacy with the Queen has gone to the utmost Extent.

*But for all that, he was prevailed upon not to accept the resignation provided Canning did not actively assist her cause. The Cabinet this day decided upon a Bill of Pains and Penalties against the Queen, to be introduced into the Lords : and the law officers were forthwith directed to draft it. This Bill was to involve the Queen's banishment, but no divorce.*

*July 4.* The Report of the Secret Committee of the Lords is this day made, charging the Queen with adulterous Intercourse with a Foreigner, who had been her menial Servant, and with a course of Conduct of the most licentious Character. The Report was unanimously agreed to by the Committee . . .

In Cabinet last night it was determined to found on this Report a Bill simply of Divorce, and to leave foreign residence to be insisted on as a Condition of such Income as Parl<sup>t</sup> should allow to the Queen. Mature Reflexion, and the intermediate Discussions, had convinced all the Ministers, who were originally adverse to Divorce, that such a Bill was open to the fewest objections.

*The second reading of the Bill of Pains and Penalties in the Lords was adjourned until the Judges returned from circuit in*

*August.* Both sides had made elaborate preparations. There was strong reason to believe that the Queen's supporters had been bribing the men of the Guards : while she herself took a house in St. James's Square, in order to have to pass Carlton House every day on her way to Westminster. Lord Castlereagh, who lived next door, barricaded his windows and slept at the office. The Duke of York, who was 'extremely popular with the Troops,' determined 'if occasion should arise for calling on the military to act, that he would keep his Horses saddled, and take the Command in person.' The entire police was mobilised, and barriers were erected at the entrances to Parliament Square : but the crowds proved to be far smaller than had been anticipated.

The long hearing ended on November the 6th with a vote of 123 to 95 in favour of the second reading. Of the minority, 'no one Speaker asserted the Queen's Innocence,' but some were opposed to Divorce on conscientious grounds, and some on grounds of expediency, and some thought that the King's conduct disentitled him to a divorce, while most voted according to party policy. The division was not good enough for the Government : it was 'uncertain whether the Bill will pass the Lords, and very improbable that it should pass the other House.' But the Cabinet could not decide to withdraw it. A deputation waited on the King 'at his Cottage in Windsor Park,' and got his consent to the withdrawal of the divorce clause. The Archbishop of York moved for its omission in committee, and was supported by Lord Liverpool : but the Opposition voted its retention, as most likely to be fatal to the Bill, and the Archbishop of Canterbury and a majority of peers supported them for other reasons.

*Friday Nov. 10.* The Bill yesterday was reported with very little Observation. In the Evening a Cabinet was held, at which it was determined with the King's Assent that if the Majority on the 3rd reading did not amount to 10, the

Bill should be withdrawn. At this Cabinet a violent Attack was made by Ld. Liverpool in his nervous irritated manner upon the Ld. Chancellor as not having duly supported him. Ld. Eldon afterwards observed that the die was cast, and that it was impossible for him and Ld. L long to go on together. These Gusts of Passion . . . have lately broken out several times in the meetings of the Cabinet.

The third reading of the Bill having been carried by a Majority of 9 only (108 to 99), Ld Liverpool immediately rose, and proposed that further consideration of the Measure should be postponed for 6 months. Ld Grey was about to conclude a Short Speech of great Vehemence with an Amendment for the Rejection of the Bill ; but on a Hint from Ld Holland he abstained from proposing that question, which would probably have given a large Majority to the Ministers . . .

As soon as the House rose Ld. Liverpool accompanied at his particular desire by Ld. Sidmouth went to the King, They found him with his Mind made up to the Event, but he retained Ld. S after Ld. L, and with the strongest Expressions of Reliance on Ld. S's Friendship, told him that he found his Body his Nerves and his Spirits so shattered that he was unfit to cope with the Difficulties of his Station, and that he had serious Thoughts of retiring to Hanover, and leaving this Kingdom to the Duke of York.

*The King's disappointment soon reacted against his ministers.*

\*Wednesday, Nov 29. Canning, being at Paris when the Bill was abandoned, returned to England as soon as he heard of that Event. Since his Return he has been very restless. much disposed to resign himself, and to persuade Lord Liverpool to the same measure. The King meanwhile has received at Carlton House, Lord Grenville once openly, and

Lords Lauderdale and Donoughmore several times secretly. His professed object has been to show them Papers in his Possession respecting an Affair, which occurred in 1813, when the Queen having fostered an Intimacy between her Daughter and Capt Hesse, shut them into a Room together, and locked the Door with a View of affording them an Opportunity for a criminal Connexion. The King is now desirous of bringing forward this Transaction for the purpose of inculcating the Queen, not considering that it is difficult if not incapable of satisfactory Proof, and that its publication is more likely to excite Indignation against the King for now divulging it in Prejudice to the Princess Charlotte's Memory, than Reprobation of the Queen. The King probably has not confined his Communications with the above-mentioned Noblemen, as he professes, to this Subject. (Note in text : I have since learnt that by Lord Donoughmore he sent Messages to Lord Lansdowne, Ld Grey, and Lord Wellesley.) With Lord Donoughmore certainly he has conversed as to the Restoration of the Queen's Name to the Liturgy, and untruly represented to him that he is himself willing to concede the Point, but that his Ministers prevent him. Sir John Leach and Sir Wm Knighton continue to be received on the most familiar footing at Carlton House, and may probably be carrying on some Intrigue with the Opposition. The latter is in the Habit of conveying the Marchioness of Conyngham clandestinely to Carlton House at times when Sir B. Bloomfield is sent out of the Way, that he may be enabled to deny the Fact. The King scarcely makes a Secret of his Dissatisfaction with Ld. Liverpool, and seems to have withdrawn much of the Confidence which he reposed in the Chancellor and Ld. Castlereagh. In short there is none of his Ministers, who has any material Influence over him, except Ld. Sidmouth, in whom he expresses his

entire confidence. The Duke of York sees the paralyzing Effect of the King's Character and Conduct on the Gov<sup>t</sup>, and does everything in his Power to keep Things on a proper Footing, rendering at the same time to the King more than the Justice, which the latter denies to the Duke, whenever he has an Opportunity.

*In December, Canning ultimately resigned : Peel was sounded as to filling his place, but was not pressed to come in. On January the 23rd, 1821, Parliament reassembled, and the King's Speech only mentioned the Queen to the extent of recommending a pecuniary provision for her. The disappointment thus caused among the Opposition was enhanced by Castlereagh's 'direct disavowal of any further criminatory Measures.' By this time popular feeling in the Queen's favour had mostly spent itself : the King was well received on his way to Westminster, and an amendment to the Reply was defeated by 101 votes.*

The King was very much elated by these Circumstances, and began immediately to recur to the Notion of a Divorce, and to that of producing the Papers relative to Capt. Hesse. At an Audience, which Ld. Sidmouth had on Friday, he conjured the King to lay aside all Thoughts of both these Schemes ; urging, with Respect to the Divorce, that the present Turn of popular Opinion in his Favour rose from the Belief that no such Measure was contemplated ; and with regard to the other Point, that the Production of the Papers was more likely to excite popular Indignation against himself than Abhorrence of the Queen. The King admitted there was much in what Ld. S said, and seemed to lay aside the Projects he before had ; but he probably will recur to them at some future Period, for it appears to be the Character of his Mind to revert to favourite Plans, forgetting the Arguments by which he has been once convinced of the Impracticability.

*A Bill was introduced to grant the Queen an annuity of £50,000, and passed with little opposition before the end of February. The Queen announced by Brougham that 'she would take no money until she was instated in all her Rights'; but the very day after the Royal Assent was given, she 'sent to Coutts's to enquire whether they had received the Money.' It appeared that her original attitude had been encouraged by the hope of a subscription for her support being got together by the Whig peers, which, though it began well with a promise of £10,000 a year from Lord Fitzwilliam, soon passed into oblivion. But every advantage gained by the Government only made the King more impossible to handle.*

The King has determined to be crowned on the 18th of June, and afterwards to make a Voyage to Ireland . . . Tomorrow he returns to Brighton, where he has spent nearly the whole Winter in dalliance with Lady Conyngham, who possesses a complete Dominion over him. It was probably in great measure at her Instance that he projected his intended Trip to Ireland. But he has yielded to the Advice of his Ministers, and determined to go to no private House in that Island, nor to any place except Dublin.

*Lady Conyngham was on intimate terms with Lord Grey, and encouraged the King in his attitude towards Liverpool. Their next quarrel was over the appointment of an obscure curate called Sumner, who was tutor to Lady Conyngham's son, to a canonry of Windsor. Liverpool prevailed once again; and the vacant stall was given to 'the King's private Chaplain Dr Stanier Clarke, a paltry Sycophant'; but his relations with the King were more strained than ever, and the King openly abused him to his visitors at Brighton.*

*In February, a motion in favour of Catholic Emancipation was*

*very unexpectedly carried in the Commons ; Canning thereupon returned from Paris to support the subsequent Bill, which passed the lower House by 19 votes. In the Lords, it was expected that ' it would to some extent be carried.'*

Lord Liverpool . . . began to waver, and asked Lord Sidmouth, whether it would not be the most prudent Course to make the Bill as good as they could, and let it pass. Upon Ld S's reminding him of the Line he took on former Debates, and assuring him that he would fight against the Bill strenuously to the last, Ld L buckled on his Harness and screwed up his Courage ; but Mischief had certainly been done to the cause by his wavering . . . Great Pains were also taken to inculcate a Belief that the King was not hostile to it, and this no doubt operated upon some imbecile Members of both Houses. The King, who seems to have no Opinions of his own, but to be operated on by those around him, while Lady Hertford was in his Confidence, was a vehement Anticatholic ; but Lady Conyngham is of a different Party, and has probably prevailed on the King, if not to change at least to relax in his Sentiments.

*The Duke of York, of sterner stuff, made a strong speech in the Lords against the Bill, thinking it ' right for the Public to know that one at least of the Royal Family remembered the Terms upon which that Family succeeded to the Throne,' for which he received the unanimous thanks of the Bishops. In a later conversation at Brighton between the King and the Duke, ' the King, asserted that his Opinions had undergone no change, but admitted that he had been looking at the Coronation Oath, and found it less strong than he had imagined it to be.'*

*In May the King successfully underwent a serious operation for the removal of a tumour from his skull, ' proceeding from a Blow which he received in the Summer of 1819 in passing through a*

*Window at Ld Liverpool's at Combe Wood'—perhaps a contributory factor towards his dislike of the Prime Minister.*

*The entire month of June was occupied by discussions as to changes in the Cabinet. Lord Sidmouth was anxious to retire ; Lord Liverpool was determined to readmit Canning ; the King was extremely averse to either of these alterations. The death of Lady Liverpool exacerbated the Prime Minister's ill-temper : while Lady Conyngham excited the King's aversion to Canning, by whom he declared that he had been personally affronted. In the midst of the general recriminations which went on, Hobhouse entirely omits any mention of the splendours of the Coronation, or of the fiasco which attended the Queen's attempt to mar the ceremony, though it appears from his correspondence that he was heavily engaged with the necessary arrangements to exclude her from the Abbey.*

*The evils of feminine influence were once more exemplified in July.*

*July 3. The Duke of Wellington is dissatisfied with the King, partly because after refusing to dine with his Grace, the King conferred that Honour on the Duke of Devonshire ; and partly, because after authorizing a Statement to the Duke of W. that he should consult him on the recent State of Affairs, he failed to send for him. The Duke, at a recent Audience, after hearing the King's Complaints, said in his brusque manner, ' If you do not like us, why do you not turn us out ? ' The King made no answer, and the Duke after a short Pause made his Bow. The secret History of the Dinner at Devonshire House is said to be that Lady Conyngham is anxious to marry one of her Daughters to the Duke. This is the first Instance in modern Times of the King dining with a Subject in London. It has excited considerable Observation on all sides, and seems open to just*



Exception, the Duke being decidedly in Opposition ; for if it means nothing, it is calculated to impose on the Duke's Party ; if it means anything, it is unfair towards the Ministers.

*The Duke of Wellington in conversation with Sir Benjamin Bloomfield expressed his views upon the harmful influence of Lady Conyngham in no uncertain terms, and was persuaded to furnish a minute of what he had said.*

(Wednesday, Aug 1) The King in consequence fixed last Friday, and on that day was sumptuously entertained by the Duke. At this Dinner the King behaved with pointed Rudeness to Lord Liverpool in the Presence of the foreign Ministers . . . The King at length acquainted Ld L that he should appoint the Duke of Montrose Ld. Chamberlain, and that when in Ireland he should lay his Commands on Ld. Conyngham to take the Mastership of the Horse. Upon this a Cabinet was summoned on Monday by Ld. L, where it was determined to resist the appointment of Ld C, and lest the King should complain, if that Determination were not reported to him before his Departure for Dublin, it was further determined to communicate the Resolution to him forthwith, and Ld. Sidmouth being the Minister who was to accompany him to Ireland was selected as the one who should make the Communication.

*At first the King took the stand that his resolve was unalterable, and that the household appointments were entirely his own concern. But Sidmouth, well accustomed by now to these unpleasant interviews, was able to hold his own.*

A great deal of confidential Conversation passed between them, in which Lord S strongly urged the Necessity of the King maintaining in the View of the People an exterior

Correctness of Deportment, which if maintained leads away the People from enquiring minutely into what passes within ; and the King insisted on the Necessity of his enjoying some female Society. In fine the King gave way, and promised to make no Appointment until his Return from Ireland, but intimated his Intention of then nominating Lord Conyngham before his Departure for Hanover, which he said would take place within 5 Days after his Return from Ireland. Lord S thought it was unnecessary to debate about what should then take place, and returned to his Colleagues, who continued sitting, and were no little pleased with the success of his Expedition.

*Scarcely were they rid of the King and Lady Conyngham than the satisfaction of the Cabinet was crowned by the Queen's death, an event which had not the remotest connection, if the diary is to be believed, with her disappointment at being turned away from the Coronation.*

No sooner had the King sailed from Portsmouth than the Queen was seized with an obstinate Obstruction of the Bowels, which carried her off on the 7th inst . . . The Queen's Disorder was caused by her taking a large Quantity of Magnesia on the 30th ulto., which operated inconveniently as she was going to the Play in the Evening. To counteract this Effect, she took a Dose of Laudanum, which locked up the Mass of Magnesia. Her attendants were not aware of the Mischief till the 2nd Augt, when the Obstruction had become intensely obstinate. No passage was forced till the Night of the 6th, when Nature was too far exhausted.

*Her death was not allowed to interfere with the Irish programme, though the King assented to Court mourning.*

*LAUNCELOT IN LYONNESSE.*

BY MARGARET DARRELL.

LAUNCELOT drew rein at the brow of the hill and the clinking of his horse armour died into silence. Below him the track dipped sharply and was soon lost amongst the undergrowth that clustered about the edges of the Bois des Morts. To right and to left the high ground swept in a semicircle, the barren moors of Cornwall embracing this northern border of Lyonesse. Between the two territories, as effective as any fortified wall, lay the tangled growth of the forest upon whose slowly swaying tops he now looked down as upon a turgid sea.

All was very much the same as it had been upon that morning six years ago when he had paused upon his journey to Castle Perilous, to fight in that tournament in which Gareth of Orkney was to win the hand of the Lady of Lyonesse. The barren moorland, the dark forest, the glimpse of fertile meadows and of sparkling sea beyond, all these were unchanged. Familiar too was the up-thrusting conical hill that rose like an island in the belt of trees, bearing a hermit's cell on its rocky peak.

The scene was the same, yet the circumstances were tragically different. Then he had been accompanied by a gallant and cheerful retinue, stalwart knights, several of whom were his own nephews, squires and pages, pack-horses, chargers, riding jennets, all the following of King Arthur's favourite knight. Now he was unattended, his horse was serviceable but undistinguished, his shield was bare of device. Gareth lay dead and he was an exile on whose head lay a price for any who chose to betray him.

A little tightening of the muscles of the mouth, a slight narrowing of the hawk-like eyes were all that gave hint of bitter thoughts. Suffering and pride had laid their seal upon his face, stilling the mobile vivacity of youth, carving deep lines about the mouth and nostrils, freezing all into the semblance of a watchful mask. It was with no touch of fear but with the practised vigilance of the soldier that Launcelot glanced behind him. Seeing that the moors showed no sign of life, he raised the visor of his helmet sufficiently to place in position a square of linen with holes cut for the eyes, closing the steel again over a face that had become featureless and vaguely terrifying. The linen mask was hot, but it might preserve his disguise if he were challenged. There were enough knights carrying out some fantastic vow or other to make plausible his fiction of a penance of namelessness. He did not want to fight, yet if he were recognised in Lyonesse it would be that or instant death; and Launcelot would fight. Life did not hold much attraction, but he had a fastidious dislike of the idea of dying at the hands of the rabble of Lyonesse, whom he despised.

A touch of the spur set his horse in motion again and it began to slither down the track. In half a mile the trees closed in overhead and Launcelot had considerable difficulty in finding his way. He met no one, not even a stray charcoal-burner. The Bois des Morts had never been cheerful, but now it was oppressive in the gloom of the matted trees. It was with a sense of relief that at last he saw sunlight ahead, even though the open country meant imminent danger.

It was easier than he expected. Although it was high noon the fields were deserted and in a straggling hamlet men lifted incurious eyes to watch him pass. The way was plain, for the towers of Castle Perilous rose proudly across

the plain. Launcelot rode on, unhurrying yet unwearying, as a man rides whose goal is fixed.

Nevertheless, when little more than a mile lay between him and the castle outposts, Launcelot dismounted and let his horse crop the sweet grass at the roadside. He had ridden since soon after dawn and hunger had begun to make itself felt. He could not ask for food from those who would certainly count themselves his enemies, so that here, where pious hands had set a stone to catch the trickle of an ice-cold spring, he took his ration of bread and goats' milk cheese from the saddle-bag and, thrusting the linen mask into a position from which it could be twitched down in haste, ate and drank with a joyless determination.

The brief meal was soon ended, but he continued to sit, elbow on knee, musing over the deserted landscape. Something struck him as significantly different, but his former visit had been in company that had given him little time for reflection. The sound of a step behind him made him pull the mask over his face and jerked him back to watchful attention.

'Give you good day, sir.'

The wavering voice was thick with the Southern accent, but the language it spoke was intelligible, not the uncouth patois of Lyonnaise. Launcelot saw an old man, a petty merchant or trader by his dress, who was gazing at him with interest.

'Give you good day, father,' he returned, and raised his hand in salute.

'You have come from far?' The remark was as much a statement as a question.

'From Cornwall.' Of what good to deny it when any stranger was a marked man in this closed land of Lyonnaise?

'From Cornwall—ah!'

The conversation seemed in danger of lapsing altogether. Launcelot was in no mood to start any fresh topic and the old man stood silent, leaning on his staff. Nevertheless, he spoke at last, hesitatingly.

‘You come from King Mark’s court?’

‘No.’

The denial was quicker than was perhaps politic, but not even in this hour of danger could Launcelot tolerate the suspicion that he was one of that brotherhood.

‘From King Arthur then?’

‘No. From overseas.’

‘Aye. I thought so, perhaps. Maybe you know Sir Launcelot?’

In its sudden directness, the question was startling, but Launcelot’s voice was steady in answer.

‘I have known him.’

The audacity of the avowal seemed to check the old man and for a minute or two his mouth worked, but no words came. Then he returned to the attack, his red-rimmed eyes peering at the impassive mask.

‘What do you here alone amongst us? For whom do you seek? No friends of Launcelot come here.’

Slowly Launcelot rose to his full height and with quiet deliberation he strode over to his horse, tightening the girth and examining the bit. He swung himself into the saddle and, with the gentle movements of the practised horseman, edged his mount over to where the old man stood. Looking down on him he said:

‘I come to pay my respects to the tomb of my Lord Gareth. As for my reasons for coming unattended and in disguise,’—he touched the linen mask—‘that is a matter which concerns me alone. I give you good day.’

He had ridden several paces down the road when the

sound of faint shouts made him look back. The old man was waving his staff and hobbling after him as fast as his aged limbs would carry him.

‘My lord ! My lord !’ he cried as he came within ear-shot again. ‘An I had known that you were a lover of our Lord Gareth, I had not spoken as I did. I pray you give me pardon. Suffer me to be your guide. If you are a stranger in Lyonesse, you will scarce pass the gates unless a citizen go with you.’

‘And you hope to reap silver,’ thought Launcelot as he stared down at the shifty eyes and pinched, greedy mouth. Nevertheless, he knew the man spoke rightly. Better accept his company and pay him than be held for question at every turn. With none too good a grace he assented and they resumed their slow pace across the plain.

As they went, Launcelot marvelled afresh at the bad repair of the track. Twice they had to make a detour where a long arm of the encroaching sea had eaten its way across the causeway, leaving now, at low tide, a channel of treacherous mud and pools of scummy water. As they drew nearer, he could see too the sea-wall, breached and ruinous, and could mark the white line of the destroying salt far flung over what once had been fertile land. To his comment, the guide shrugged his shoulders.

‘Since my lord died, none care,’ he said. ‘What will be, will be. Work on the dykes was heavy and now there is none to drive men to it.’

‘But the Lady of Lyonesse——’

‘Is but a woman—and there is no heir. The child in her womb died when she learned of my lord’s murder. God damn Launcelot and all his works,’ he added with savage vehemence.

Launcelot bowed his head over his horse’s neck, fumbling

with the bridle. He had thought that he was past all suffering, but the sight of the ravaged land and the horror of the senile curse stung him more than any sword wound. He asked no more questions.

His guide seemed to be well enough known, for after a short parley they were admitted through the city gates and none molested them in the narrow streets. For a moment he thought they were going to enter the Abbey Church, but the old man turned left to where the ground was clear for a bow-shot's length before the Sally-port of the Castle Perilous itself.

'My Lord Gareth is buried in the Castle Chapel,' said he ; 'you must leave your horse here.'

The little eyes glinted at him evilly and Launcelot wondered if he were walking into a trap. Then he dismounted. From the moment that he had crossed the borders of Lyonesse, he had put himself into a snare ; of what use to draw back now ?

The old man had gone forward to speak to the guards and once again he was passed without question. The drawbridge clanged hollow beneath his feet and the inner walls towered above him. They passed the ordered bustle of the Outer Baily, were engulfed momentarily in the shadow of a low arched passage, and came to the quiet sunlight of the Inner Baily where the Chapel lifted its airy pinnacles of new gleaming stone at the foot of the massive walls of the Keep.

Launcelot halted.

'Leave me now,' he ordered ; 'I will find my own way back. Here is thanks for your services.'

The old man mumbled unintelligibly, but his fingers clutched at the proffered silver and presently he turned reluctantly away. Launcelot lifted his helmet and the



mask and with bowed head passed beneath the carven portal.

At first his eyes could see nothing clearly after the glare of the outside sunlight, but he made out that the Chapel was, by singular good fortune, empty. Then he paused irresolute. Where he had expected to see one only, there were two tombs, two carven figures lying with their feet towards the high altar. Heraldic decorations, bright almost as the day when the painter had left them, gave him his answer. The tomb on the right was that of Gaheris, Gareth's elder brother by some six years, and killed with him in that self-same bitter fray. He had forgotten Gaheris, had forgotten that he had married Linet, the half-sister of the Lady of Lyonesse. Launcelot turned left, past the gay hope of the phoenix emblem, and looked down at last on the stone effigy of the boy he had knighted, of the boy that he had killed.

Long did he gaze down, bowed and leaning on the hilts of his two-handed sword. The sculptor had done his work well. There was the broad brow, the finely shaped nose, the gentle, humorous mouth and the strongly moulded chin. But the laughing eyes were shut, the alabaster was white and cold, and the body of Gareth, that young supple body with all its grace and strength, lay in the darkness beneath, thrust out of life by a blind sweep of his murderous sword drawn in that frenzied battle for the rescue of Guenevere.

Almost unconsciously Launcelot slid to his knees, till his hot forehead rested on the cool marble border of the tomb. Beneath his outflung hands he felt the chill reproach of the carven knees, but in the agony of that moment there was no coherent thought. Obeying a blind instinct, a dim confused thought of reparation to the spirit of his friend,

he had journeyed here, oblivious of personal danger, without thought of what would happen after. Now he was at his journey's end and all was in vain. He tried to think of Gareth as he had knighted him on the hill above Caerleon-upon-Usk, of the young lover visiting him before the great tournament in Lyonesse, of Gareth on the tower of Camelot on the eve of his wedding. But the conjured visions would not stay. Ever there flickered before his mind's eye the murk of that dull winter's afternoon, the smoky glare of the lit faggots, Guenevere's red-gold hair streaming over the mud-stained whiteness of her shift, the bestial faces of the crowd and the thin line of palace guards, mown down like grass before the charge of armoured horse.

He threw his spirit back, through the reeking phantasmas of the remembered fight, seeking the face of his friend. He failed. As the waters veil the face of a drowned man, so the dark memories blotted it out, showing it to him blood-stained and pale, as in fact he had never seen it, but as it had hung before his inner vision ever since they had told him the outcome of the fight. Here, at the tomb's foot, he had sought to recapture the memory of the boy that he had loved, in agony he sought to pierce the barrier, crying soundlessly not for forgiveness but for understanding of the wrong that he had done. He could not have said for what he had hoped, but the reality was disillusion and very bitter, deep despair. Death was a fortress he could not storm and beneath his hands the tomb struck cold.

‘What man is this?’

The question, uttered ringingly in that quiet place, was the first intimation that he was no longer alone. Lifting eyes dazed by the inner struggle, Launcelot saw two women standing at the farther side of the tombs. Beyond them, in the sunlit arch of the door, he glimpsed a medley of squires and pages and one grey-headed figure, his erstwhile guide.

The women were robed in black, close-veiled and whimpled. He took them for nuns. Stiffly he rose to his feet.

‘I crave your forgiveness——’

‘Launcelot—Oh God!’

It was the smaller who cried out at him, white as wax.

He knew them now—Linet, widow of Gaheris, and little Liliás, the Lady of Lyonesse, Gareth’s much-loved bride. For one frozen moment they stared at each other across the tombs. He saw Liliás shrink as from a threatened blow, saw Linet fling her arms about her and heard her cry a shrill command, then there was a rush and clatter of men’s feet, startled exclamations and the scrape of steel. In an instant he had his back to a pillar and a semicircle of space lay about him, the length of his drawn sword. Beyond that space swayed a hedge of faces, angry eyes and cursing, snarling mouths, the unarmed squires who, like mongrel dogs yapping just beyond the mastiff’s reach, growled threats but did not dare to close.

This, then, was the end. He did not fear the rabble in front of him, but he had neither helmet nor shield. Just so soon as one of the men recovered his wits sufficiently to fetch a war mace or even a halberd, Launcelot knew that his life was forfeit. So this was the end of the journey. A life for a life. Expiation at the foot of the graves of those whom he had slain in error. He acknowledged the justice of his fate, but settled his shoulders more firmly against the pillar and his sword-point pricked a too adventurous youth.

‘Back! Make way!’

Slowly and sullenly the ranks parted before the command and in the opening he saw Liliás again. Very tiny she was, but very proud.

‘Back! Who gave you command to set upon this man?’

Foot by foot they yielded place, till in the cleared space Launcelot and the Lady stood alone. He lowered the point of his sword and stood, leaning upon its hilts.

‘How came you here?’

‘I came alone.’

‘Why?’

‘You saw. I came to pray at the tomb of—my friend.’

He saw her hands clench upon her rosary and for a moment her eyes dropped. When she spoke again it was more gently.

‘What seek you now?’

‘To go—as I have come.’

‘Go—in peace.’

‘Lilias!’

Linet’s shrill protest rang through the arched roof of the Chapel and was echoed by a growl from the assembled men.

‘You cannot let this man go.’

The Lady turned in anger.

‘He is alone. Are we wolves to conquer by weight of numbers?’

‘He is a murderer—outside the Law.’

‘In this place I am the Law. I say that he shall go—unscathed.’

‘In God’s name—why?’ Linet’s mouth was drawn to a thin pale line, the skin was stretched over the cheek-bones below her hollow eyes, her once laughing face was changed to a mask of hate. ‘He is a slayer of unarmed men—an outlaw—a dog to be killed. He slew Gareth——’

‘I claim a widow’s rights.’ The Lady of Lyonesse looked round the circle and the clamour sank. ‘His life is forfeit to me, mine to hold or to destroy. Captain of the Guard, in your trust I place him. Take him to the Keep.’

At the Lady's command, the guard forced its way through, hedging him about with a wall of steel. Thus protected they made their way to the door where Linet now stood with arms outflung.

'I too have a widow's rights,' she screamed; 'I claim revenge!' And of a sudden she ran towards the Outer Bailey, her black disordered robes giving her the appearance of a monstrous bird. Some of the crowd began to follow and a cry went up beyond the walls. In the distance a bell clanged hurriedly with broken rhythms.

The Captain turned to the Lady who stood beside them at the head of the Chapel steps.

'She will rouse the City,' he said; 'they do not love strangers.'

'Let her try,' answered Lilius. 'Lift the draw-bridge. I am mistress here.'

Five minutes later Launcelot heard the dull thud of the great bridge jarring home and, lifting his hand to his brow, he found it wet with sweat.

They took him to a pleasant enough chamber, high up in the central tower. There was no view from the narrow window, but the air blew in fresh and tinged with the smell of the sea. The Captain said little and, posting two men outside the door, withdrew, leaving him to himself.

Presently there came a page, bearing a venison pasty and a horn of mead.

'I have no mind to eat,' said Launcelot, but the boy set them on the table.

'My lady's order,' he mumbled, and went out again.

Launcelot stood at the window-slit and listened. A far tumult and the clanging of the bells told him that Linet had done her part effectively enough. What now? Would Lilius keep him prisoner, defying her own people, or would

she yield him to the maddened crowd? Or would she, playing as a cat plays with a mouse, pretend clemency and set him free beyond the walls? He knew just how much his life would be worth, a lone man with the country raised against him. He might, if they risked an open fight, kill a score or so, but numbers would tell in the end. It would be much as when he had watched a stag dragged down by the hounds and afterwards—Launcelot shuddered. The rabble of Lyonesse were but one degree removed from savagery.

They had left him his sword and for a moment he wondered if he would end all cleanly, by his own hand. He gave the idea no real consideration, however, for it was utterly foreign to his character. Suicide was the irrevocable surrender to Fate, the final admission that man was beaten by circumstance. While life still flowed in him, hope existed and flung out a challenge to his proud spirit to achieve the seemingly impossible.

He stood at the window-slit and pondered so deeply that he did not hear the Lady enter.

‘You have not eaten?’

He started at her voice. Her mourning robes struck a chill note in the room already golden with the westering sun. He bowed low as he answered.

‘I have no need of food. I pray you excuse me.’

‘Yet you shall eat. You have a journey before you.’

Launcelot stared a little. Her voice was light and quiet. She spoke as though she stated an accomplished fact rather than issued a command and yet he felt a sense of compulsion.

‘I pray you be seated and eat,’ she continued in the same quiet tones. ‘Time passes and I would speak with you. But you must eat first.’

Launcelot sat. He had no quarrel with Lilies of Lyon-

nesse. Rather his heart was touched with a very genuine pity and remorse for the sufferings that he had brought upon her. Up to that moment he had thought only of Gareth and of his own loss, but now he found himself thinking of the position of this girl widowed by his hand. He began to guess at her age. She had been very young when Gareth had wedded her—she must be little more than twenty now. Once or twice, in the course of that silent meal, he stole a glance at her still profile as she sat a little turned from him, her eyes on the strip of sky beyond the window. In that light, outlined against the shadowed wall, her face had an ageless look, neither young nor old, a mask carved in alabaster by some forgotten master.

He was glad when he could push back the empty trencher and drain the horn of mead. Then, and only then, did she turn to him again.

‘You have finished? Good. Now we can talk. Where is your escort?’

For a moment he hesitated, surprised by the blunt question. Then he told her. It was Mark’s land and out of her jurisdiction. She frowned a little.

‘East of the Lizard Head? That is too far. I cannot send you as far as that. If we land you at Henliston, could you make your way across the Head?’

‘Of a surety, but—’ Launcelot stammered a little, ‘you—you are not intending to set me free?’

‘Why not? Did I not say as much in the Chapel yonder?’

‘But I—Gareth—Linnet spoke truth.’

‘You expect me to revenge myself on you for Gareth’s death?’ Her composure disconcerted him and he found that he could not meet the gaze of those light grey eyes, clear as shadowed water. ‘Would your death give me

back my lord ? Moreover, you slew unknowing, not in hate.'

'And you bear me no malice ?' All Launcelot's bewilderment were in the question.

'Malice, hate ?' She seemed to ponder a moment and something of her tranquillity broke. She rose, pacing the chamber with short quick steps. 'Hate ?' she repeated. 'Yes, I hated you once. When they brought him home and would not let me see his face—the way is long from Camelot. And when I knew that no child of mine would ever call him father. You slew two when you killed Gareth. Did you know that, Launcelot ? Yes. I hated you then, you and your golden harlot !'

'Madam !'

'Seek not your sword. I fear no steel.' She leaned across the table and he saw that she had, indeed, no fear. It was he who shrank from her and her pale lips parted in a mirthless smile.

'You are angry,' she continued in that same light, quiet tone that hurt like a flick on a raw wound. 'You are angry because I have miscalled your lover. Yet I tell you that to-day I shall speak what I will and you shall not gainsay me. This hour is mine. For once you shall hear the truth.'

'Abuse me as you will, but let be the Queen.'

'Nay, why should I spare her ? I am no man to gloss my words because of her beauty. We are woman and woman. My hate is for her, not for you who are but a woman's dupe. Ah, that stung you, did it not, proud Launcelot ? You have thought of yourself as the world's great lover, damned but glorious. I tell you that you have sold your manhood to one who never knew its worth, who never saw aught in you save the reflection of her own vanity. Look back, Launcelot, look back in the mirror



of your past life and say when Guenevere has ever loved you better than herself ?'

'Silence, woman,' Launcelot broke in furiously. 'You know nothing. Our secrets are our own.'

'Your secrets ?' She mocked at him joylessly. 'Secrets ! And it is more than twenty years since minstrels first sang of your love for Guenevere ! Fool, strip this glamour from your eyes. This lust between you has been the rift through which Mordred and all his treacheries have crept. It has given cover and excuse to half the licence that rots the Court and makes a mock of Arthur's hopes for the Table Round. You bid me touch not your sacred mysteries, yet you yourself blazoned it to all Christendom when you slew twenty men to save the Queen from her just rewards !'

'Would you have me let her burn ?'

'Yes.'

The bitter monosyllable rang through the room, but with it the anger died out of her.

'Nay—— It was then too late. You could not help yourself. Launcelot, I crave your pardon, I had not meant to rail on you for what is past.' Suddenly she seemed old and weary. 'The past is finished—a web we cannot unweave. And all our present is coloured by those threads that have their beginning beyond our recall. Oh God, that in our youth we did not know the pattern that we wove. And the future—what shall we do, what shall we do ? The skein is tangled and all is marred—for ever and for ever.'

For the first time she hid her face and wept.

'You are young still,' said Launcelot lamely when he could bear the silence no longer. She caught at his words.

'In years, yes. Would to God I were old. Have you ever thought what lies ahead ? The rule is to the strong. They loved Gareth and he might have done great things, he

and the sons I could have borne. Now the land lies helpless, fruit for any man's plucking, and the people wait. Sooner or later some freebooter will come, some pirate from the Sea Lands or landless man from the Welsh hills, and will take the land—and me with it.'

'That might not be so evil a thing as you fear, Lady.'

She lifted her head and looked at him, the tears wet upon her cheeks.

'When that day comes, Launcelot, I die. Gareth and I knew what love meant, as *you* have never known it. I will call no other man lord. I shall die, Launcelot, and by my own hand if need be. When that day comes and you hear the tidings, you shall remember me.'

Launcelot winced, for her words bit deep.

'Why do you not call your men and make an end since you hate me so?' he asked.

She shook her head.

'I have told you. I do not hate you now. I pity you.'

'Pity?' The great Sir Launcelot was startled. In all his days of arrogant pride none had dared to pity him to his face.

'Yes. Pity. A word that you have not used much, either for yourself or others.' Her composure had returned and she spoke with deliberation. 'God planned you nobly, Launcelot, but a woman marred you. For your pride that has driven you down roads that you would not have chosen and for your strength that has never let you learn humility, I pity you.'

There fell a silence. All courtly ceremony, all custom of chivalry had gone. They were man and woman looking back on the wreckage of their lives and savouring the full bitterness of that phrase 'too late.'

At last, with a weary gesture, Liliás rose.

‘The sun is near setting,’ she said. ‘My Lord Launcelot, follow me.’

Without question he followed, down the dark twisting stairs and down again till the air grew cold and his out-flung hand was wet from the dripping stones. At last they stood by a small strongly barred door behind which the sea thundered close. In the gloom Liliás paused with her hand upon the bolt.

‘This is the end,’ she said. ‘You will be taken across the bay to the landing above Henliston, from whence you must make your way alone. Go in silence lest the sentry hear and give the alarm.’

Launcelot bent his knee. She checked the word on his lip.

‘Do not thank me. Thank the memory of my Lord Gareth.’

‘If ever I can serve you——’

She checked him again, speaking hurriedly.

‘If you would serve me, my lord, let us not meet again. Too many ghosts walk with us. Go now—in peace.’

With a grinding of unused hinges she dragged the door open and the inrush of the wind and the noise of the sea drowned Launcelot’s reply. They stood at the foot of the battlements, just above high-water mark, and rocking a spear’s length away floated a small boat with a solitary oarsman. In silence Launcelot clambered over the rocks, his mailed feet slipping on the weed, and took his place in the boat. The hooded rower bent to his oars and they drew away from the land.

Launcelot looked back at the great walls, but the little figure had disappeared and the door was closed. Shivering, he drew his cloak about him and bent his gaze on the farther shore.

## THE GREAT WAR IN POETRY.

BY HERBERT PALMER.

THE Great War gave birth to a tremendous sheaf of War Poetry, written from every point of view, some of it very good, and only a little of it wholly bad. No war in historical memory has called forth a quarter of such quantity united to high quality, for the plain reason that national emotions never before, for any length of time, rose to such flaming heat. Most of the enduring poems were written by actual soldiers, as, of course, they should have been ; and out of a notable score one calls quickly to mind Julian Grenfell's *Into Battle*, Rupert Brooke's *Soldier*, Wilfred Owen's *Greater Love*, Major Maurice Baring's *In Memoriam, A. H.*, and John McCrae's *In Flanders Fields* (the poppy-poem of Armistice Day)—this last strangely misapplied, because, the symbol of the poem being really the blue forget-me-not, the red poppy of Oblivion should be surrounded by a fringe of these flowers.

I suppose that the first war poem of any consequence was a lyric by Harold Begbie published in a daily newspaper a few weeks after the commencement of hostilities. As a stirring piece of propaganda and call to arms it was effective enough, but could not in any way stand for more than a period. Another early war poem, much better, and rather unfortunately obscured by time (written also during the first weeks of the War) is Ford Madox Hueffer's *Antwerp*. It was published by Harold Monro's Poetry Bookshop, and occupied seven sheets. On the cover was a rhapsodical futurist (or vorticist) design of a Belgian soldier by Wyndham Lewis, and the poem which combined futurism with tra-

ditional measures and rhyming was written in something of the same key. Though a reckless and occasional non-sensical piece of work, it is a pity that it has been forgotten, for it is full of gorgeous things of this quality :

*' For the white-limbed heroes of Hellas ride by upon their horses  
For ever through our brains.  
The heroes of Cressy ride by upon their stallions ;  
And battalions and battalions and battalions—  
The Old Guard, the Young Guard, the men of Minden and of  
Waterloo,  
Pass, for ever staunch,  
Stand for ever true ;  
And the small man with the large paunch,  
And the grey coat, and the large hat, and the hands behind the  
back,  
Watches them pass  
In our minds for ever . . .  
But that clutter of sodden corpses  
On the sodden Belgian grass—  
That is a strange new beauty.'*

Many of the other known poets of the time, from Thomas Hardy and Maselfield downwards, contributed, in one way or another, to the passionate outburst of resentment, patriotism and sorrow. But the war verse which was to stir the imaginative and cultured public to attention, chiefly came from the soldiers themselves, and was written during their military preparations in England or scribbled on bits of paper between their moments of active service in the trenches. The note at first was patriotic enough, the key poems supplied by Rupert Brooke's *The Soldier* and Julian Grenfell's *Into Battle*, with its eternally memorable :

*' And Life is Colour and Warmth and Light,  
And a striving evermore for these ;  
And he is dead who will not fight ;  
And who dies fighting has increase.'*

And that distinguished naturalist and pastoral poet Edward Thomas (not to be confused with another soldier poet, Edward Thompson) joined in with :

‘ *Up with the light,  
To the old wars ;  
Arise, Arise !* ’

Rarely, strange to say, was there any strong denunciation of the Enemy, though Lord Gorell voiced the more general national feelings during the middle of the War with *Song before Battle*, culminating in a very stirring battle stanza :

‘ *We are rising now, a nation’s tide,  
And you must dig and wire and quail,  
Your turn at last beneath our guns,  
Your turn to find defences frail.  
We are bursting in, we are breaking through ;  
The great sea sweeps your barriers down.  
You urge anew your claim on God,  
But He is silent as you drown.  
Look to yourselves, O Huns !* ’

That, of course, like Julian Grenfell’s stanza, can be otherwise applied (as much real poetry can be re-applied) and invested with a symbolical significance. As regards something better known, it was the symbolical or universal side of John McCrae’s *Armistice Day* poem which set it on the shelf of permanence, though actually it was a call to arms :

‘ *Take up our quarrel with the foe :  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch ; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.* ’

Save Julian Grenfell’s *Into Battle*, nothing better woven in the old-fashioned knightly spirit came out of the War than

Maurice Baring's *In Memoriam, A. H.* Maurice Baring has been connected with the Georgian revolt, and one of his distinguishing features is a studied conversational simplicity, so that in his numerous sonnets of a most transparent clarity he seems to be almost aiming at poems in monosyllables—though not always with complete success. But in *In Memoriam, A. H.*, a poem with a metrical texture rather similar to Milton's *Lycidas*, Maurice Baring not only reached the culmination of his lyrical powers but achieved one of the greatest elegies in the English tongue. Nearly every part of this colourful, beautiful poem is quotable, none more so than that which tells of the dead soldier's ascent into Paradise :

‘ Surely you found companions meet for you  
In that high place ;  
You met there face to face  
Those you had never known, but whom you knew ;  
Knights of the Table Round,  
And all the very brave, the very true. . . . ’

But it was not Milton and the Elizabethans with whom the soldier-poets went to school, but rather A. E. Housman and the realistic John Masefield. Sir Edmund Gosse during the War said that they had put A. E. Housman's *Shropshire Lad* into their knapsacks. This is not always quite plain, though the note of Housman seems to thread through much of their work. Well transmuted, it is certainly present in Edward Thompson's :

‘ And Tigris, racing seaward,  
Remembers here a space  
The storm of human anguish  
That swept the desert's face.  
The flocks are grey hyenas  
And here the jackal feeds—  
On the pastures of Sannaiyat,  
Sannaiyat flanked with reeds.’

At any rate much of the hard acidity in Housman's *Shropshire Lad* crept into the later war verse. The notes of Julian Grenfell and Maurice Baring die down into realism and disillusionment—sometimes softened into bravado, or crossed by dreams of home, as in Robert Graves's *Queer Time* :

*'The trouble is, things happen much too quick,  
Up jump the Bosches, rifles thump and click,  
You stagger, and the whole scene fades away ;  
Even good Christians don't like passing straight  
From Tipperary or their Hymn of Hate  
To Alleluia-chanting, and the chime  
Of golden harps . . . and . . . I'm not well to-day . . .  
It's a queer time.'*

The 'whole scene fades away' is a reference to the scene of home and childhood ; and this nostalgia ever creeps through the bitter contemplation of battlefield horrors and the pictures of maimed and ruined youth, as in Sassoon's :

*'Return to greet me, colours that were my joy,  
Not in the woeful crimson of men slain,  
But shining as a garden ; come with the streaming  
Banners of dawn and sundown after rain.'*

But Sassoon, fine soldier (like Lord Gorell and Edward Thompson he was decorated with the M.C.), fine poet, penetrating satirist, and master of words, if sometimes a little lacking in imaginative depth, and shying against the suggestive use of symbols (though his weird *Haunted* has a very symbolical content), writes equally frequently in this manner :

*"We're none of us the same !" the boys reply.  
"For George lost both his legs ; and Bill's stone blind ;  
Poor Jim's shot through the lungs and like to die ;  
And Bert's gone syphilitic ; you'll not find  
A chap who's served that hasn't found some change."  
And the Bishop said : "The ways of God are strange !"*



The manner of realistic speech had been made possible by Masfield's *Widow in the Bye Street*; and the influence of Masfield is still more obvious in the little anecdote of the suddenly uplifted soldier who was about to be killed, and didn't know what he was fighting for :

' So Davies wrote : " This leaves me in the pink."  
Then scrawled his name : " Your loving sweetheart, Willie."  
With crosses for a hug. He'd had a drink  
Of rum and tea ; and, though the barn was chilly  
For once his blood ran warm ; he had pay to spend.  
Winter was passing ; soon the year would mend.'

The real Sassoon note, however—and there is a Sassoon who stands entirely on his own platform—is struck more plainly in :

' The House is crammed : tier beyond tier they grin  
And cackle at the Show, while prancing ranks  
Of harlots shrill the chorus, drunk with din :  
" We're sure the Kaiser loves the dear old Tanks ! " '

I'd like to see a Tank come down the stalls  
Lurching to rag-time tunes, or " Home Sweet Home."  
And there'd be no more jokes in Music-halls  
To mock the riddled corpses round Bapaume.'

The poem reminds us of many strange things, not merely that the English were first to use tanks, but that among many of the soldiers any bitter feeling that they may have earlier entertained against the enemy was completely dying away, and that they were transferring their animosity to the civilians who had comfortable jobs at home and shouted patriotism while only too glad to keep out of trouble. Not only Sassoon, but also Charles Hamilton Sorley, a soldier-poet of great promise who was killed (but who wrote little verse directly applicable to the War), voiced this feeling of for-

givenness to the enemy. In his sonnet *To Germany* he cries "You are blind like us," and adds :

‘ *When it is peace, then we may view again  
With new-won eyes each other’s truer form,  
And wonder.*’

Pride in their military calling after the first ardours had died down was rarely expressed in the verse of these soldier-poets ; so that when it does occur it is to be wondered at and almost admired. Perhaps it was struck more frequently after the War was over, a notable example being Edward Thompson’s *The Author writes his own Epitaph* :

‘ *Stranger, if passing by you seek to learn  
What man was he whose ashes fill this urn—  
Know : there’s a ghost remembers now by Styx  
He marched with Maude, was with the few who first  
The embattled sandhills of Samara burst,  
And once hit Faulkner over the ropes for six.*’

But the speech is very restrained. Of exultation there is little, for the great in-memoriam and heroic note of Laurence Binyon’s *For the Fallen* was hardly possible of expression by the soldiers themselves.

The soldier-poets who came chiefly before the eyes of the public during the War were a trio—Robert Nichols, Robert Graves, and Siegfried Sassoon. Of these the only one who strove to give anything like a complete picture of individual outlook and development, from the opening of the conflict to the final contemplation of the horrors of the battlefield, was Robert Nichols. He divides the first part of his war-time book (the part dealing with the War) *Ardours and Endurances* into six parts : (1) The Summons, (2) Farewell to Place of Comfort, (3) The Approach, (4) Battle, (5) The Dead, (6) The Aftermath. It must be read

as a whole rather than in parts, for none of the poems save the well-known *Fulfilment*, beginning :

‘ *Was there love once ? I have forgotten her.  
Was there grief once ? Grief yet is mine . . .* ’

is especially good in itself, though very many stanzas pin the attention :

‘ *Sometimes a sniper’s bullet whirs  
Or twangs the whining wire ;  
Sometimes a soldier sighs and stirs  
As in hell’s frying fire.* ’

Robert Nichols was not long in France (see Robert Graves’s autobiography *Good-bye to all That*) and probably some of the poems, particularly the well-known *Assault*, were not written as complete individual experiences, though, at the time, they were very effective. Robert Nichols (who was one of the poets specially selected for Edward Marsh’s Georgian anthologies) is at his best in an Elizabethan vein, his *Sonnets to Aurelia* among his most powerful and interesting work. To-day his war poems are of little value, these having been superseded by the passionate and bitter rhymed documents of Sassoon, who with Robert Graves served through nearly the whole period of war. Once or twice they addressed their poems to one another ; and both suffered to the full the disintegrating horrors of trench and field.

The war poems of two others with complete periods of service to their honour, Edmund Blunden and Wilfred Owen, were published long after the cessation of hostilities. As one would expect in Edmund Blunden’s verse, the landscape is in the foreground, the soldiers chiefly present to give the earth articulation. His memories are of :

‘ *A whole sweet countryside amuck with murder* ’

rather than of the actual individual human beings in the

struggle. These beautiful and mournful poems belong as much to the kingdom of pastoral as war verse, and invite our attention to the experiences and rustic personality of the brave man who wrote them rather than to the struggle itself.

The war poems of Wilfred Owen are, on the other hand, of quite a different calibre. First published in 1920, with an introduction by Siegfried Sassoon, they startled immediately by a vigour as great as Sassoon's, but with less of bitterness and an almost greater infusion of pity. They were much less carefully worked over than Sassoon's, and abounded with difficulties, if not obscurities—which is probably one of the reasons why the Eliotites have recently cast such favourable eyes upon them. But Wilfred Owen was killed in the War; so we are probably right in looking upon many of the supposed virtues of these poems as minor faults. The manuscript had received no final revision, many half-lines are entirely missing, and Owen's proof readers had to be Sassoon and Blunden in place of the poet himself. The most magnificent lyric of all, *Greater Love*, abounds with faults, and yet, for all of them, is probably the most passionate and intense song that came out of those awful years. In this poem Owen addresses the woman of his love, telling her that as objects of affection he prefers the men who are dying at the Front to any woman born of Adam's seed:

*' Red lips are not so red  
As the stained stones kissed by the English dead.  
Kindness of wooed and wooer  
Seems shame to their love pure.  
O love, your eyes lose lure  
When I behold eyes blinded in my stead !*

. . . . .

*Heart, you were never hot,  
 Nor large, nor full like hearts made great with shot ;  
 And though your hands be pale,  
 Paler are all which trail  
 Your cross through flame and hail :  
 Weep, you may weep, for you may touch them not.'*

The poem is really a very patriotic outburst and rather different in sentiment from most of Owen's later work—which, as in *Anthem for Doomed Youth*, is verse of Warning :

*' What passing-bells for these who die as cattle ?  
 Only the monstrous anger of the guns.  
 Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle  
 Can patter out their hasty orisons.'*

Says Owen in some notes which he left for a preface :  
 ' Above all I am not concerned with Poetry. . . . My subject is War, and the pity of War. . . . The Poetry is in the Pity. . . . All a poet can do to-day is to warn.' Nevertheless, the poet triumphed over the propagandist, so that (though perhaps in a rather remote sense) some of the verse is almost too self-consciously poetical. At any rate Wilfred Owen sought to free himself from anything relative to doggerel or the easy prose line. Probably there is a more intense and memorable revelation of the seamy side of war in these poems by Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon than in all modern prose writings put together. So much they gloriously achieved—an almost impossible feat in these days of much-read and much-written prose.

Among others whose war poems were not published in accessible book-form till after everything was over—and also revealing the seamy side of the struggle—should be specially mentioned Edgell Rickword, Richard Aldington, and Isaac Rosenberg. Edgell Rickword's contributions are few in number, though they are among the very best things in his strange symbolistic cupboard. But Richard Alding-

ton in *Images of War* (1919) has given us a complete picture, and were it not that these carefully painted cameos of beauty and passion had been written in free verse, and are therefore lacking in carrying power, they might have realised a far wider distribution. As regards Isaac Rosenberg, his now well-known *Dead Man's Dump* shows to what imaginative ardours free verse can actually rise if there is a passionate impulse to inform it. Nevertheless the poem is not entirely successful. Rosenberg's sense of rhythm was always a little shaky, and during his period of active service it certainly did not improve. Unfortunately he was killed, and one of the really promising geniuses of our time was brought to an end. Nearly every scrap of his work has recently been collected, and it reveals an apocalyptic if somewhat hunch-back imagination striving in the net of an insufficient education. Tortured, only half articulate, intellectually violent, but often beautiful and powerful, he might have fully discovered himself, and, in spite of some deformity in his imaginative physique, have risen to be among the first three or four poets of our time. But his gods willed otherwise, and *Dead Man's Dump* is to-day his revered monument and full stop.

But there is one special and unique poem, less esteemed, which in spite of its somewhat conventional language the Future will, possibly, prize over all. I give it here in full :

‘ *By all the glories of the day  
And the cool evening's benison,  
By that last sunset touch that lay  
Upon the hills when day was done,  
By beauty lavishly outpoured  
And blessings carelessly received,  
By all the days that I have lived  
Make me a soldier, Lord.*

*By all of all man's hopes and fears  
And all the wonders poets sing,  
The laughter of unclouded years,  
And every sad and lovely thing;  
By the romantic ages stored  
With high endeavour that was his,  
By all his mad catastrophes  
Make me a man, O Lord.*

*I, that on my familiar hill  
Saw with uncomprehending eyes  
A hundred of Thy sunsets spill  
Their fresh and sanguine sacrifice,  
Ere the sun swings his noonday sword  
Must say good-bye to all of this—  
By all delights that I shall miss,  
Help me to die, O Lord.'*

The author of the poem, which bears the date June 29, 1916, was William Noel Hodgson (not to be confused with the poet, Ralph Hodgson, of greater fame). Two days after he wrote it, on July 1, he was killed in the battle of the Somme.

To few soldiers was given such knowledge of the certainty of approaching death. Still fewer were able to achieve entire reconciliation with that fact and uncomplainingly renounce all the delights of their youth, and then write a really fine lyric out of the experience. The mind that can so pull itself together in strength and exaltation has something in it of the sublime as well as heroic.

The poem was evidently written at white heat. It bears all the impression of having been composed in one short hour, not resembling any of those creations which have been slowly polished into perfection and then dated on the day of final completion. For instance, the 'By that last sunset touch that lay' would probably have been revised (to avoid

the clash of the two 'thats') if the young poet had had sufficient time to think of the final effect of his words ; while something throbs through the whole of it which reveals the swiftness of unalloyed inspiration.

Like every exceptional poem it communicates from within as well as suggestively from without ; and contains an image of remarkable revelation, strengthened by a brilliant ambiguity, pun, or homonym :

*' I, that on my familiar hill  
Saw with uncomprehending eyes  
A hundred of Thy sunsets spill  
Their fresh and sanguine sacrifice.'*

For there can be no true mental and spiritual progress without pain, no continuous joy (at least not in the collective life of the human race) that has not been introduced by suffering, trial, or agony, no permanent satisfaction without sacrifice ; all of which should, of necessity, be accompanied by a mental act of Faith—the sanguine (bloody) sacrifice an offer of the sanguine (confident) will. Is not the image a perfect expression of Reality ? And further, the worn-out day that plunges down in blood-red fire gives promise of a new unclouded day, is ' the shepherd's promise ' of a fine morrow, let the Night intervene as it will.

And yet how vulgar and insufficient seems the language of prose when one seeks to paraphrase these naïve, red-hearted stanzas ! And how trivial and commonplace seem all explanations beside the supreme comment, ' Saw with uncomprehending eyes.' Nature is florid with signs and symbols, the flares and fingers of unshakable Truth, day by day passed by unheeded. During recent times Pacificism has been so often spiteful and knock-kneed, and so much has been done to belittle the sacrifices of English soldiers during those unimaginable years, that the mind of the reason-



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And all the wonders poets sing,  
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able pacifist feels itself revolted, and finds the words of this unfulfilled poet glowing with a peculiar significance. For though war must be avoided at a thousand costs, it cannot be avoided at all costs, and until the heart of man is entirely cleansed and changed, a nation's defence and self-preservation by means of war and the self-sacrifice of youth have to be shudderingly contemplated.

### THE DAY BEFORE DEPARTURE.

*Because a fire was in my blood  
I left the house, went through the wood,  
And took the winding mountain road,  
Forever singing as I strode.  
I came to Tor : at Portaleen  
I saw the Straits of Moyle shine green.  
I heard the hoarse, insistent sound  
Of growling tides, that sweeping round  
The Head of Tor, race through the bay,  
And whiten it with surf and spray.  
Then suddenly I understood  
What was the meaning of my mood ;  
And knew that when I could not sleep  
I'd see the grey-green braes rise steep,  
And hear beyond the traffic's roar  
The sea-birds cry on Murlough shore.*

BRIAN SPILLER.

Belfast.

## *DEATH IN THE APPALACHIANS.*

BY DORA WILLSON.

OF the three, a birth, a marriage or a funeral, it is the last that draws the greatest crowd in the Appalachian hills. A birth, by its very nature, is business for women only. A wedding was a festive occasion in the good old days of the war and just after, when the men were making easy money cutting down the timber on the hills. But now the hills are all 'cut-over,' and have been for ten years or more, the mills have moved out, and the men who are left are on relief wages—and you don't do much merrymaking on that. But a funeral is one thing you cannot skimp on, however hard the times.

I had a good example of it when our neighbours' eldest daughter died. The Hathaways are poor 'hill-billies,' with a farm where no farm should be, scattered on the steep, rocky slopes of denuded hills. But when Ann Hathaway died, everything was done in style, though it doubtless put the family in debt for a generation.

McArthur's big shiny ambulance came for the body, and soon after the neighbours began going up the 'holler' to the Hathaways. The men stayed out by the barn and took comfort in nips of corn whiskey. The women crowded around Mrs. Hathaway, who, between sobs, told her poor story over and over. A friend got dinner ready: beans, potatoes, 'sow-belly' (fat side of pork) and a big pot of coffee. A little later, the Hathaways went off to town in their rattly Ford to make all necessary arrangements with

the 'mortician.' Meanwhile some friends stayed to clean the house.

That afternoon, a child of ten or eleven knocked at our door. 'Mrs. Robson, Ma'am, would you want to give a dime to help get the flowers for Ann?' She held out a grubby sheet of copy-book paper on which was written: 'This is to state that Ileta Dreer is intitled to collect for Ann Hathaway's flowers. Signed: James Roscoe, Teacher.' I mused over the 'intitled' and Ileta urged me anxiously: 'They've all a'given something so far. They aint a one turned me down. You kin give a little old nickel if you aint got no dime.'

The next day, when I saw the really lovely wreath the 'little old nickels' and dimes had bought, I wondered how many miles that bare-footed, 'intitled' child had trudged to collect them.

The ambulance was back at noon the following day, but from early morning already cars and people had been going up the side-road to the Hathaways. Many would stay all day, some overnight—and those not close friends only. Toward evening I went up too. The house had been metamorphosed. Mr. McArthur with his mortician's art had done his best to create a *chapelle ardente* according to the rules in the little living-room. What furniture there had been was moved out; chairs were placed along the walls, except on one side. There, in a sort of nook lined with oppressive dark-red hangings, the coffin rested on a low trestle. The Hathaways had chosen a pearl-grey plush casket with embossed motifs and silvery handles. The lid was raised and Ann, clothed in white silk, lay in a nest of crinkly white satin, rather like the interior of a magnified jewel-case. The pillow was of white satin with silver fringes, as was the coverlet over her legs. A white tulle veil hung over the

whole affair, down to the floor. There was no electric light, of course, in the Hathaways' mountain home, but that did not trouble Mr. McArthur. He had his own little batteries to provide the soft pink light that shone discreetly from within the casket and in the two tall floor-lamps at the foot and the head of the bier.

One's eyes went at once to the face. Discounting all the effect of pink lights and veil, it had to be said that Mr. McArthur and his assistants had 'done a marvellous good job'—the family's way of referring to it. The cheeks were delicately tinted, the eyebrows and eyelashes darkened, the mouth rouged. And the hair! In beautiful, elegant curls it lay over the powdered forehead and the glistening pillow. 'Ann always did want a "perm,"' said Mrs. Hathaway tearfully. 'Well, she's got it now.'

Women sat all round the darkened room, silent for the most part—simply enjoying, I imagine, the unaccustomed luxury of sitting still in the middle of the day. All night too a group 'watched up' with the family. The coffee-pot was kept boiling on the kitchen stove and every now and again a woman would get up and pour herself out a cup. At dawn, everyone slipped home to get ready for the funeral proper.

It was to be at two o'clock; but an hour before, when I arrived, cars of all vintages were parked around the house, the big ambulance as close to the porch as it could get. A crowd of men in their Sunday best stood about outside in small groups, chatting; the women were inside; the family invisible upstairs. The first thing to do was to make one's way to that rose-coloured alcove and look at Ann for a while. Some women would weep, or two or three would stand there together and comment in whispers on the appearance of the corpse. The flowers were arranged on chairs

to the right and left—surprisingly beautiful sprays of roses and snapdragon and carnations, with tissue ribbons and gold or silver inscriptions that fascinated the children.

As we sat there waiting, the men filed in through one door and out at another. Many carried babies or led little toddlers who were lifted up 'to look at Ann.' This is the one occasion that I know of in mountain life where the man takes over the care of the smaller children.

When this slow procession was over, the family came down, the father and mother first, then the young brothers and sisters, uncles, aunts, various relatives, some fifteen or twenty in all. By the time they were massed before the coffin, all were weeping and some were close to hysterics. Mr. McArthur tactfully piloted them back to the stairs and made a sign to the preacher. He opened his Bible which bristled with bits of paper that marked his selections, and read steadily, unfettered by thoughts of chronology or progressive revelation. John and Moses, the prophets and the Book of Revelation, Genesis and Paul—nothing was left out. Women snuffled, men crowded in the doorways and windows, children stared round-eyed. After the reading, there was preaching. Then a quartet of two men and two women sang 'I walked in the garden at evening' and 'Abide with me,' and with that the preacher handed us over to the undertaker.

In a twinkling everything seemed to snap into activity. Flower girls, decked in their brightest clothes, came up and were handed the sprays to carry to the ambulance. Mr. McArthur turned his broad back to us and slowly closed the casket. An assistant helped him wheel it to the door, where it was lifted from the trestle and carried out by six young men. Meanwhile the family had trooped down again and was settled in the cars assigned to it. Everybody found a

ride somehow, and the procession drove off slowly, with headlights on.

The cemetery was, as is often the case here, a family one, on a knoll across the valley. A few trees, overgrown rose bushes, tangled grass, two or three newer tombs with headstones. Across the open grave straps were laid, secured by a spring. The coffin was set on these while the preacher prayed and spoke the familiar words: Dust to dust . . .

Then it was all over. Mr. McArthur dismissed us firmly: 'The family and friends are now requested to withdraw.' The crowd stood back to let the weeping Hathaways pass and I watched Mr. McArthur, very matter of fact, press the spring that lowered the pearl-grey casket into the rocky hill-side earth.

It had been a grand funeral. Everyone had been there. For two days, one had done almost nothing but visit with one's friends. And everything had been 'just right': Ann herself, and the casket, and the flowers, and the preacher. A grand funeral. And now—back to work.

*W. Virginia.*



## PICTURESQUE PIRATES.

BY DOUGLAS GORDON.

PIRACY acquires an element of romance in all walks of life. The outlaw is usually a picturesque figure, and the same principle applies to the wild winged bandits of wood and precipice, beautiful birds for whom life is one long conflict, either with mankind or the animal kingdom in general.

Birds of prey, indeed, stand in a class apart from the remainder of the feathered world with which they are for ever at variance. They constitute a great natural army whose function is to wage war upon all other forms of life. To every species, as to every unit in a highly organised human army, has been relegated some special line or method of attack, together with a class of animals against which to direct operations. At the same time, each individual is a free-lance, a soldier of fortune, living for the most part a solitary existence, in some instances shared by a mate, but otherwise holding no social intercourse with a living creature. Certain species might, indeed, be regarded as gregarious, but only in the most limited sense of the term, and as a rule, unlike many rapacious creatures, hawks or falcons tolerate the proximity of others more readily than that of birds to which they are in no way akin. It almost seems at times as if a tacit comradeship in arms existed between rival pirates of the air. In country where both species occur, it is not unusual to see harriers quartering ground in the company of kestrels to whom no exception is taken. Should a raven or a crow appear, however, instant action is launched against the new-comer. Buzzards and kestrels quest within no

great distance of one another, as though in competition, and upon one eventful occasion I watched peregrine falcons and kestrels—a pair of each—in air at the same time. As they wheeled, a peregrine flew between the two kestrels, to the perfect unconcern of everybody. Once, indeed, the two larger falcons appeared to differ, but this, presumably, was a family affair and nothing else of an untoward nature occurred.

The distinction between hawks and falcons is purely structural, and in general habits no line of demarcation may be drawn. In each order one finds migrants and residents ; rock and tree builders ; birds which nest upon the ground or make no nest for themselves ; hunters of feather and fur ; others which are largely insectivorous. Formerly, nearly thirty species were either resident or visited the British Isles in considerable numbers. Now, barely a quarter of that number could be regarded as common, even in circumscribed areas, and it seems obvious that in Great Britain at any rate these picturesque bandits of the aerial highways have fared badly in the age-long conflict, the intervention of man having finally turned the scales against them.

Man, indeed, is usually held responsible for the decline of a wild race, although actually his activities by no means always constitute the last word in such matters. The tide of wild life ebbs and flows, and in the former case one might indicate outstanding examples, such as those of the red squirrel and the chough, where natural causes have mainly contributed to produce the obvious effect. If allowed to do so, such animals would probably recover their lost status in the course of time, natural revival being no less frequent than decay, as evidenced in the vegetable kingdom, where cycles are the rule, although for cogent reasons the case of

birds and beasts differs materially from the mechanical operations of inanimate life.

There can be no doubt that ability to survive is a racial gift, possessed in a greater or lesser degree. There is an inevitable tendency to accept the numerical standing of a species without comment, and as a rule this attitude might as well be adopted as any other, since even in the most pronounced cases it is seldom possible to formulate a theory which is unassailable. Usually increasing scarcity is attributed to the greed of collectors, but this does not account for the rarity which in the first instance placed the eggs or plumage of the birds at a premium. It usually means that the habits of the species render it unfit to cope with the special form of persecution to which it is subjected, and it is therefore incapable of holding its own under the conditions which prevail in certain countries. Whether the species is indigenous or introduced makes little apparent difference. The roe-buck, 'turned down' in Dorset many years ago, now proves impossible to eradicate in districts where it has become a nuisance, whereas the native red deer has long since disappeared from most of its native haunts, and is only maintained in certain circumscribed areas by careful preservation. Again, the little owl, like the grey squirrel, is extending its dominion in every direction, while the osprey refuses to be reinstated, the kite evinces no sign of improving its position, and Montagu's harrier confines itself to a few localities beyond which it seems unable to secure a footing. Whatever means are adopted, some species succeed while others fail, and perhaps the most interesting examples of varying fortunes among birds whose habits are similar in general principle are provided by our rapacious birds.

That man has played the major part in effecting the entire or partial banishment of many beautiful hawks and falcons

is only too apparent, and yet, strange as it may seem, the ferocious little sparrow-hawk, generally admitted the most destructive of winged marauders, remains one of the commonest birds of prey in the British Isles, being scarcely less abundant than the comparatively harmless kestrel, even as the carnivorous and voracious magpie claims precedence over the vegetarian jay.

Indeed, so far as a wild species is concerned, little connection can be traced between its abundance and its harmfulness to human interests. The eminently inoffensive honey-buzzard has fared even worse than the predatory kite. Rats and rabbits are more plentiful than hares, not because they are less destructive, but merely upon account of their superior hardihood. Generally speaking, the larger the beast or bird, the more it has suffered at the hands of man, being conspicuous and therefore easily destroyed. There are outstanding exceptions, however, since both the merlin and the hobby—two of the smallest falcons—have proved less successful in the struggle than their larger relative, the peregrine.

There is no apparent reason why the hobby should have failed to establish and maintain a firm standing in this country, where the kestrel and the sparrow-hawk succeed without difficulty. That the one species is migratory while the others are resident bears little relation to the case. The migrant Montagu's harrier has to a large extent superseded its resident cousin, the hen-harrier, and many of the birds most numerous represented in this country during the nesting season exchange our winter for a more congenial climate. Migration, indeed, should prove helpful rather than otherwise to persecuted birds, particularly of the rapacious order, since their manner of life in the more extensive southern forests is less hazardous. The merlin, it must be

remembered, is also a frequent, though not a confirmed migrant, being one of those unaccountable birds which, nesting only upon high ground in this country, yet find our winter too cold for their taste, although its congeners who breed upon less exposed levels face the seasons in due course. Many moorland birds are alike in this respect. Both the ring-ouzel and the wheatear, nesting well above the 1,000-foot contour, forsake our shores at autumn's approach, while the whimbrel and snow-bunting, after nesting in Northern Europe, proceed to the Mediterranean countries for winter quarters.

In its own way, the hobby is even more inconsistent, for while its range extends in other countries up to 65° N. latitude, in England it seldom penetrates north of Yorkshire. Since inability to face the climate can scarcely be responsible for this limited appreciation of British woodlands, one can only assume that owing to one of the 'freaks' not uncommon in wild-life distribution, the hobby has never found its way over England as a whole, even as the nightingale formerly confined itself mainly to the eastern half of England. As in the case of the latter bird, circumstances might conceivably alter this habit. It should be at least as common as the kestrel, whose way of life it adopts in so far as it preys largely upon insects, although at times diverging from such innocuous pursuits to emulate the tastes and disposition of the sparrow-hawk, with more than the latter's lightning-like agility. It is also a bird of the woods, seldom, if ever, nesting upon cliffs or rocks, and might indeed be described as a connecting link between the small falcons and the sparrow-hawk.

Certainly the hobby possesses an unfortunate propensity for attracting attention. He can scarcely escape notice as he flashes along a shaft of sunlight, his showy black-and-white

markings agleam, the incredible celerity of his movements baffling the eye with every turn. Nor does he temper his dashing style with even a measure of discretion. The only pair which has attempted to breed in my locality within recent years courted immediate disaster by levying toll upon a chicken-run, the owner of which neither realised nor appreciated the distinction conferred upon his property. Yet, even so, the hobby does no more to incur the hostility of man than the sparrow-hawk, and in many respects is far better placed, since all wild-bird preservation societies have long been working for his protection.

The sparrow-hawk, upon the contrary, is shielded by neither sentiment nor law. Indeed, with the possible exception of the great black-backed gull—a fine species which has been unfortunate enough to acquire ‘a bad press’ of late—one could name no British bird against whom a more united front is shown. It would be difficult to find even an ‘enlightened’ game-preserve who applies the principle of live and let live to this grey-plumed pirate of the hedgerows and spinneys. He is shot at sight. His nest is considered the fair prize of any boy who can reach it, and is keenly sought, for the beautiful chestnut-splashed eggs, so varied in size, shape and markings, possess a strong attraction for all clutch-collectors. The young birds, again, declare their whereabouts so unmistakably that the keeper experiences no difficulty in detecting them. Even the adults seem indifferent to the gun at such times, and usually join the brood in grisly array upon the vermin-rail. Guile the bird has none, caution does not figure in his make-up. He carries all before him by dint of swift wing and sure blow, even garden birds not being immune from his headlong assault. He dashes into poultry- or game-run with the same reckless temerity. He is like a winged weasel, ferocious, inexorable,

regardless of consequence, seldom relinquishing a chase upon which he has once embarked, even if it leads him into the very homes of men. His impetuosity repeatedly proves his undoing. Yet with all these handicaps, the sturdy little warrior more than holds his own. There is scarcely a wood in the country where his nest may not be seen, hardly a preserve so vigilantly 'keepere'd' that it is not subject to his ravages, and even as in olden days people were employed as 'glead' or kite-scarers, so in Western England it is not unusual to see dummy figures, some of them ingeniously equipped with old guns, placed near farm-buildings in the hope of intimidating the intrepid sparrow-hawk.

A high-handed policy carries the field, it would seem, yet the bold hobby has proved a failure, while the comparatively mild kestrel remains the best represented of British *raptores*. True, sentiment is upon the little red falcon's side, and naturalists for the past half-century have pleaded his 'sovereign usefulness to man.' How little such appeals weigh with the game-preserve, however, can be ascertained by the most casual survey of the keeper's larder, and it is clear to anyone versed in such matters that human forbearance does not constitute the main reason for the kestrel's success. His descents from grace, though infrequent, are too indubitable to procure exclusion from the black list. It must be admitted that possibly his depredations have been underrated by his many advocates. One has known him guilty of intruding upon a party at the bird-table and antexting one of the diners as his share. He has been seen to strike down a bird as large as a thrush, and upon one occasion within personal experience a brood of young partridges owed untimely exit from life to his activities. The farmer's wife knows him only too well as 'a nailer for chicken' when the evil mood is upon him, so perhaps the

attitude of the country people towards the kestrel is not altogether unjustified. In any case, he is killed, like his brother bandits, whenever possible, not because of offences necessarily committed, but in case he should offend—queer justice, but that which prevails. None the less, he survives, and throughout the country as a whole outnumbers the wary carrion crow, the destruction of whom frequently taxes the keeper's ingenuity to the uttermost.

Once lost, the position of any wild species is not easily recovered. Owing, however, to the materially changed outlook with regard to wild-life preservation, harassed birds now enjoy opportunities for recuperation hitherto unprecedented, and it will be interesting to watch the effect of the new conditions upon those species which have escaped virtual extinction. It remains for time to prove whether the buzzard will ever again nest in hawthorns upon the South Downs, or circle, still-winged, over the leafy undulations of Hampshire and Surrey. Last year, the bird was recorded as nesting in the New Forest, to which it would prove a distinct ornament, and, if encouraged, would certainly thrive in country so peculiarly adapted to its requirements. Natural restoration is usually effected by gradual expansion, however, and excepting along the sea coast, where it can nest in security, the buzzard makes little real advance eastwards as yet.

A secure nesting-place is essential to a large wild bird, and it will usually be found that those which have proved the most tenacious either build in inaccessible spots or possess the knack of concealing the site. The tawny owl, being regarded askance, would not be so well represented to-day but for its habit of utilising rabbit-holes, and the most determined efforts to arrest the steady encroachment of the little owl have proved abortive for a similar reason. The



barn owl, upon the contrary, owes its diminished status largely to the loss of its strongholds by the modernising of so many old farm buildings and the replacement of thatch by slate and corrugated iron.

Briefly, the secret of any bird's success or failure, so far as its competition with man is concerned, lies in its vulnerability or otherwise at the nest, and it is in this respect that the larger birds have failed. The huge structure of the kite or honey-buzzard could scarcely escape notice, even without the publicity which the birds themselves draw upon the locality, while the eggs or young of the harriers being upon the ground merely invite destruction. The larger the bird, the greater its handicap in this respect, and such species have therefore proved totally unable to hold their own in this country where extensive unpopulated spaces are virtually unknown. Nature has only provided them with means of defence against *natural* enemies, or conditions which might be regarded as normal, the influence of man up to a certain point being within the natural kingdom. No provision is made for abnormal or artificial conditions under which heading an over-populated country or the activities of game-preservers and oologists may surely be enumerated.

It is significant that the increase of the raven has been effected along the coast-line, and probably there is no part of Great Britain where buzzards are more numerous to the square mile than in Pembrokeshire, particularly the St. David's peninsula, where every bird builds upon the cliffs owing to the lack of timber to provide inland eyries. The nests are therefore unassailable without the aid of rock-climbing apparatus, and since this involves undesired publicity, the birds are little harassed. The cry of the buzzard is now one of the most predominate notes even in that land of wild-bird voices, and the comparative harmlessness of

the species is evidenced by the fact that while the big hawks circle incessantly over field and farmstead, one hears no complaints of their depredations. Sheep that die on the cliffs and the ubiquitous rabbits provide all that carnivorous birds require in that primitive corner of Wales, and one has only to watch the buzzard at work to remove any doubt as to his true disposition and propensities.

Not long ago I witnessed a curious exhibition of buzzard methods when walking along the coast-line near remote Penberry, formerly the haunt of kites, as the name implies, now relinquished to the fiercer peregrine falcon, whose shrill bell-like cry in springtime mingles with the raven's croak, the harsh 'laugh' of the great black-backed gull and the chough's distinctive but nervous call, which contains a hint of unrest, as though the bird were continually protesting against its sentence of gradual yet inexorable banishment.

It was a warm afternoon in late August. Along the rocky seal-haunted shore the great seas broke with a sombre and oily roll, as though stirred to reluctant motion by irresistible forces which they would preferably have ignored. Even the gannets and porpoises had suspended activities, the oyster-catchers alone keeping vigil along the beaches. Ahead, upon the cliff-top, stretched a grassy slope at the foot of which dwarf-gorse flamed among the bell-heather's prevailing pink, and innumerable excavations testified to the untiring energies of the rabbit population. The landscape appeared to be untenanted by anything larger than bees and butterflies, until one noticed that each of several green ant-hills, visible in the near distance, was occupied by a dark motionless object which, upon closer inspection, proved to be a large bird—a buzzard. Then, as one watched, it became evident that the quiet scene was far from being as devoid of incident as first impressions suggested. Now and again,

from its post upon one of the hummocks, a buzzard took sudden wing, and, swooping low, circled the burrows, then returned to its perch. The proceeding was repeated by one bird after another, and before long the reason became obvious. Rabbits were coming out, as they frequently do in early afternoon when the sun is bright, and the buzzards, anticipating the movement, were lurking in wait to pounce upon the first as they squatted, still drowsy, at the mouths of the holes. One was reminded of the manner in which blackbirds appear upon a lawn before a shower, or of the more curious tactics of cats which prowl upon a river-bank when a flood is imminent, in readiness for the voles who, equally aware of coming events, will shortly be trekking to more secure quarters. Eight buzzards had assembled upon that slope to scramble for a share of the feast, like hungry fowls, the moment that a kill was made, and six more took wing from adjacent points when at last I moved away.

This ability to anticipate the reactions of other animals to atmospheric conditions seems general among rapacious creatures. It is also clear that they benefit to a large extent from the activities of one another. The principle of honour among thieves certainly does not apply to the robbers of earth and air, and there can be little doubt that one bandit watches another with intent to claim a share of any success achieved. Where rapacious animals are at all numerous, an individual is seldom allowed to remain in undisputed possession of anything that is worth dividing. The number of winged scavengers that gather round a dead sheep on high Dartmoor would surprise many people unfamiliar with the country, and a far less liberal feast is not infrequently made a bone of contention.

Not long ago a Devonshire farmer, visiting his traps soon after sunrise, came upon a fox-cub crouching among some

ferns and mounting guard over a newly killed rabbit for the possession of which two buzzards, two magpies and a carrion crow were all contending. The hawks were circling low above the fox, swooping and barely sheering off as he rose to snap at them, while the other birds held seats among some birches in the background, awaiting a suitable opportunity for intervention upon their own account. Naturally the appearance of the man broke up the interesting party, and one can only conjecture as to the probable end had the disputants been left undisturbed.

How far the anticipation of consequence figures in the tactics of birds of prey which rob one another is an open question. There is an obvious distinction between the wresting of a newly killed quarry from a more successful competitor when the capture has been witnessed or heard, and the deliberate shadowing with intent to forestall or claim a share. Often, no doubt, it is merely a matter of opportunity, which was probably the case in the incident just described. Upon the other hand, an opportunity frequently repeated would soon encourage a habit, as with an old sea-eagle who makes a practice of robbing the osprey. Sometimes the bolder birds of prey actually appear to follow sportsmen in order to swoop upon disturbed game.

In country where peregrine falcons are at all numerous, this most redoubtable of winged bandits occasionally makes an unexpected addition to a shooting-party. Most disconcerting was the experience of an Argyllshire sportsman who, having flushed a woodcock upon some rough ground near the coast, was reserving his shot until the bird had passed a bush beyond which lay an unobstructed view. This object attained, he was about to squeeze the trigger when the woodcock swerved with the suddenness of a snipe. Across its track there flashed a grey-brown streak, and while the man

watched in astonishment, the bird which he had been about to shoot was struck down before his eyes by a peregrine falcon.

Recovering from his momentary chagrin, he first shouted to scare the falcon, which vanished as though just aware of his presence, and then advanced to pick up the woodcock. It had dropped like a stone but was not immediately visible in the undergrowth, and he was looking about for it when the clatter of wings sounded behind him and he turned to see the bird winnowing gaily away. So complete was this second surprise that he never thought of the gun in his hands, even if he could have brought himself to use it under the circumstances.

Upon another occasion in the same neighbourhood, a large 'moss' was being tried by a party when a solitary wigeon rose well ahead of the guns, and was making its way seawards when the winged bolt once again swept across the skyscape and dropped full upon the wigeon—or so it seemed. But the latter merely changed its course and flew on at an accelerated pace, while the peregrine, after the momentary check, embarked upon a stern chase. Above the moss the two birds sped, with almost inconceivable rapidity. The peregrine was the swifter, however, and was soon above his quarry. Again he stooped, again the wigeon 'jinked' and started afresh, and so the chase continued, twisting and turning, a wonderful exhibition of winged power and agility upon both sides. To the watchers it seemed interminable, but it could scarcely have been a matter of minutes before the wigeon, whose turns had been growing shorter and more erratic, fell at last into the rank vegetation, while the falcon, doubtless marking the spot in his mind's eye, mounted as the onlookers advanced.

The general resolve was to pick up the duck in order that

the falcon should not benefit from his high-handed policy, and a search was being conducted among the rushes, when up clattered the widgeon, its strong measured wing-beats suggesting that he had not lost a feather. Clearly both woodcock and duck had adopted the simple policy of taking cover, the last shift of a wounded or exhausted bird.

It is difficult to decide whether the numerical status of the peregrine has actually improved within recent years, or whether the apparent increase is due to a more general knowledge of its haunts. The bird may be found more or less regularly dispersed along the southern and western coasts, occurring more sparsely among the precipices of the Lake District, and are, of course, numerous in Scotland. Now, by a curious recoil of the pendulum, the revival of falconry constitutes a greater menace to the peregrine than the activities of game-preservers or oologists, the young birds being in such demand that no accessible eyrie is safe from the raider with the rope and crowbar. Last summer in South Wales I was openly told about two young peregrines which were being trained in the neighbourhood and were regarded among the things that a visitor 'should see.' The inevitable inquiry as to where they had been procured elicited the name of a cliff near by, mentioned without the least reserve. The *legally protected* young falcons were practically upon exhibition !

Apart from the distinction of belonging to another order, the peregrine might be considered a sparrow-hawk upon a more spectacular scale. Each preys mainly upon living and feathered game which is captured either by surprise or swift pursuit, the stronger bird naturally aiming at larger fowl, although pigeons constitute the favourite fare of both. Grouse and partridges fall easy victims to the falcon, but, being negligible upon many parts of the coast, do not essen-

tially figure upon his menu, which mainly consists of sea-fowl and waders. Numerous puffins fall to his lot, those unfortunate little birds being the rabbits of the feathered world—everybody's game. The oyster-catcher is another frequent victim, since he can always be found along the water-line or perched upon the rocks, conspicuous in his black-and-white plumage and orange extremities, and I have seen a falcon in closer attendance than could have been desired upon a little flock of choughs. He is never at a loss for a quarry when wild ducks are 'in,' and can always fall back upon a straggler from a rook army if other supplies fail.

The peregrine seldom courts observation. He is not fond of exposing his lithe, lean silhouette against the blue of sea or sky after the manner of a meditative old raven, preferring a ledge below the summit of a cliff—overhung if possible. There he will perch for a long while, his cold, keen eye scanning the beaches and watery expanse spread wide below, his entire pose haughty, aloof, inscrutable, as becomes one who knows that anything a-wing or afloat is either hostile or neutral. Upon such occasions he is sometimes upon the look-out for game. At others he is resting, not being one of those buoyant-winged pirates who finds leisure in soaring. There are times, however, when he both quarters and hovers, and as he poises in air for a brief survey of the world below, his wings are as motionless as those of the buzzard—the finest exponent of this most beautiful aerial accomplishment. The widely reputed hovering of the kestrel is actually a far less impressive display, since in the little red falcon's case suspension is maintained by a perpetual fanning, upon the same principle as a man treading water to keep himself afloat.

The voice of a hawk or falcon is unmistakable, though

subject to variations so innumerable that even an experienced ear may be deceived as to the author. No rapacious bird possesses a song or even a refrain, but almost all are more loquacious than is generally supposed. Among adults outcry usually takes the form of a chatter, shrill in the case of the smaller species, that of the peregrine being somewhat harsher, but high-pitched when startled at close quarters. The buzzard, though most talkative of all *raptores*, confines its vocal efforts to strident wailings. The seldom recorded, because rarely heard, scream of the peregrine is not altogether unbuzzard-like, but more melodious, having acquired that indefinable ring which suggests a sea-bird. It may be heard from fledgelings when hungry, and does not entirely cease until late autumn. Immature birds of all species are more vociferous than adults, their voices being pitched upon a plaintive note. The mewing of sparrow-hawks—the buzzard call in miniature—is a note peculiar to the young.

Young peregrines are sometimes encountered in the most unexpected places. I once discovered one sitting disconsolately upon a huge crag not far below the ancient cathedral of St. David's. He had, doubtless, wandered inland, and his expressions of discontent with his surroundings attracted my attention to his whereabouts. The appearance of these birds upon edifices such as St. Paul's is not altogether remarkable. From a bird's point of view there is probably little distinction between a huge pile of masonry and an outstanding rock, nor would crowded streets, regarded from a commanding height, differ from a populous beach. Kestrels, like owls and jackdaws, frequently nest upon window-ledges and turrets of ruined castles, and it would almost seem at times that the abandoned works of man appear to possess special attractions.



Between the precipices of St. David's Head and the seal-haunted inlets of Porth-y-dwfr, there stands the ruinous shell of a long-deserted hamlet, known locally by an appropriate Welsh name, the interpretation of which is *Beyond the Rock*. From these desolate tributes to human hardihood of long ago three chimneys rise, like monumental columns, upon one or other of which some winged pirate is usually established, like a grim weather-cock, a self-appointed coast-guard watching the sea-board for his own purposes. Above, the great cairns, grey and unchanged since Leschi landed nearly fifteen centuries ago, blot out every indication of the noisy, bustling life which is modern Britain. Below, against the blue and viridian green vastness of the sea, the gannets drift like giant snowflakes ; from the crags sounds the raven's croak, from the shore the curlew's call. And beneath the foundations of the chimney upon which the wild bird sits, rabbits burrow where fires once cooked their ancestors. Omar Khayyám's allusion to Jamshyd's forsaken courts which ' the lion and the lizard keep ' does not present a more realistic example of Nature's final triumph over human activity.

## THE PILLORY.

BY A. E. SNODGRASS.

It is one hundred years since the pillory was abolished in this country. Old customs, good or bad, die hard. The pillory had been a piece of penal furniture for nine centuries and had become as familiar a feature in the structure of law and order as the gallows.

It must have been no light penance to stand in the pillory. As an ingenious mode of punishment it suggests Torquemada in his undergraduate stage. Less directly deadly than the guillotine—that hole for the head gave Dr. Guillotin especial joy in his fell machine—it was nevertheless pregnant with dire possibilities. A stern ordeal at the best, it often opened the door to the mortuary. There were so many other sinners casting all the stones they could find.

Conjecture a typical scene.

A raised platform on which stood the victim behind a T-shaped planking adjusted to his height. In the top of the T three holes for head and hands. These vital extremities securely padlocked; no freedom of movement except for the feet, whose restlessness served only to aggravate the durance vile of neck and wrists.

The edifice is reared in a public place, and there is no restraint upon the temper or caprices of the onlookers, who gather for sport or revenge. Mud and garbage are flung freely and rotten eggs fetch quite a good price. The young bloods cannot resist such a cock-shy. Sometimes more dangerous missiles are used and the culprit is fortunate if

he does not at least lose an eye. His head soon becomes a whirl and blood drowns his vision. His impotence is pitiable ; his martyrdom at once a refined and brutal torture. Verily the block itself was more humane with its agony less long drawn out.

Some died through the shame of a pillory appearance ; many died through ill-usage while in its grip. Official records abound with such entries as ‘ Killed in the pillory,’ ‘ Murdered in the pillory.’

And such an infernal machine was only wiped out a hundred years ago, the year that Queen Victoria began her reign. Civilisation, after all, is as the cynic will have it—only skin-deep, and very thin-skinned at that.

The old English name for the pillory was the *halsfang*, or stretch-neck. The Anglo-Saxons conceived the device, and it was in common use long before the Conquest. Most countries in Europe adopted variations. In France it was *le carcan*, in Germany *preller* or *pranger*. It varied in size, though not in essential form. Usually it was built for one person, but sometimes the accommodation was more generous. In Merrie England they were never stingy in their pleasantries.

And pleasantries literally they were—for the mob. ‘ Butcher’d to make a Roman holiday ’ was a conception that spread far beyond the Mediterranean. A tenanted pillory was the irresistible signal for high jinks. Here was a mortal placed aloft as a common butt. He presided, as it were, at an orgy, and round and about him the people danced and drank and sang. In between whiles, to keep the merriment going, they would try their hand at what is done at fairs with the coconuts. There were a few guards to keep order, but there was no order to keep. There were pillories for women too ; they were permitted

that much equality, though the thew, tumbrel, and ducking stool were more generally favoured for the erring female.

Originally the purpose of the pillory was to degrade dishonest bakers, butchers, brewers, and others who cheated the poor by means of false weights and measures. Statutes of Edward I decreed that such offenders should be exposed on the pedestal for public disgrace 'without peril of their bodies,' which of course in practice was a legal fiction. Perjurers were also candidates. In a colossal list of misdemeanants we read of punishments for stealing a veil, for selling stinking meat, for deficiency of coal in sacks, for telling the Mayor a lie, for taking away a child to go begging with it.

Later on courtesans, common scolds, brawlers, male and female, came within the scope of this 'State trap of the law,' and in 1637 there was a further extension of its clientele. All who printed books without a licence were then placed in the vice, and soon it became the favoured method of punishing political offenders. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it had a busy career with delinquents of this character, and a lively history attaches to some of the consequent incidents.

Punishment by pillory for all offences save perjury and subornation was annulled in England in 1816 by an act of George III. In 1837 the pillory was put out of action entirely. The perjurer, Peter James Bossy, was the last person to stand in a London pillory. He spent an hour in the machine erected in the Old Bailey on June 20, 1830.

Dread forum though the pillory was, lampooners were wont to scoff at it as being able to keep 'neither knaves nor honest men in awe.' On occasions the pillorying

proved a triumph for the person installed. The public were the jury in the matter, and if they found a verdict in favour of the prisoner they did not hesitate to record it and defy the intention of the judges.

Daniel Defoe was the most famous man who ever stood in the pillory and his experience was far from intimidating. The crowd crowned him with flowers, casks of wine and beer were rolled up, and his health was drunk four times four to the accompaniment of huzzas and songs. The alleged culprit was transmogrified into a martyr and a hero. Defoe was exhibited on three days. The *London Gazette* of August 2, 1703, announced the fact as follows :

‘LONDON, *July* 31.—On the 29th inst. Daniel Foe, *alias* De Foe, stood in the Pillory before the Royal Exchange in Cornhill, as he did yesterday near the Conduit in Cheapside and this day at Temple Bar ; in pursuance of the sentence given against him at the last sessions at the Old Bailey for writing and publishing a seditious libel intituled *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. By which sentence he is also fined 200 marks, to find sureties for his good behaviour for seven years, and to remain in prison till all be performed.’

Daniel was in the lion’s den, but he was not afeard. He had arranged matters with characteristic daring, forethought, and craft, contriving on the first day of his public ‘degradation’ to have published his vigorous ‘Hymn to the Pillory.’ The leaflets were distributed amongst the throng and they stirred the populace to a frenzy of enthusiasm. Instead of garbage they flung laureates. ‘Dauntless on high stood unabashed Defoe.’

The ‘Hymn to the Pillory’ did not mince words ; it was a dirge to his detractors. As he stood, held by the neck in the dock, so to speak, the prisoner denounced his

judges. Here is a sample of this oddest of odes, which 'hymns' denunciation instead of praise.

*The first Intent of Laws  
Was to correct the Effect and check the cause ;  
And all the ends of Punishment  
Were only future mischiefs to prevent.  
But justice is inverted when  
Those engines of the Law,  
Instead of pinching vicious men,  
Keep honest ones in awe !  
Thy business is, as all men know,  
To punish villains, not to make men so.*

Our Simeon Stylites duly went back to Newgate, but he was accorded liberty to write there, and he somehow found means to convey his manuscripts to the printers. Sweet are the uses of adversity. A biographer has said :

'It is no exaggeration to state that if Defoe had not been put in durance the world would never have heard of Colonel Jack or of Roxana, and *Moll Flanders* would never have been written. Even *Robinson Crusoe* would have lacked some of its most valuable touches. What Bedford Jail, some thirty years previous, had been to Bunyan, Newgate and the pillory were to Defoe. They taught him how to become immortal. Our most bitter enemies are sometimes our best friends.'

Another noteworthy sojourner in the pillory was a man of very different calibre, William Prynne, the Cato of his age, who lost his ears in order to be heard. His ears indeed were cropped twice ; he suffered ten imprisonments, inflicted by all parties ; sat in two Parliaments ; was both for and against Charles I ; inveighed against the Church, the stage, the drinking of healths and a score of other things ; wrote 200 works ; lived until he was almost seventy, and died as Chief Keeper of the Records of the Tower, a post

which Charles II thrust upon him in order to quieten his vitriolic and torrential pen.

It was due to his onslaught on the stage in high Puritanical blast that the pillory first pinioned him. The vehicle of this was the inimitable *Histriomastix, the Player's Scourge, or Actor's Tragedie*, a ponderous volume of 1,100 pages upon which he expended seven years of toil. He was a B.A. of Oxford and a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, and the book, which castigates the stage and all its traffickers as lewd, ungodly and idolatrous, is a mine of erudition, exploded with such recklessness as to crush its argument in the avalanche and turn diatribe into ineffectual vapouring.

The *Histriomastix* came under the fearsome purview of the Star Chamber. Our temerarious author had referred slightly to kings and to the 'women actresses' who were then coming into vogue, displacing the 'boy heroines.' Charles I's queen had herself been acting in a pastoral at Whitehall, and so it was held that her majesty was insulted. An indictment resulted in an amazing sentence: the book to be burnt, the author expelled from the Bar, deprived of his Oxford Degree, to stand in the pillory, to lose both his ears, to pay a fine of £5,000, and to suffer perpetual imprisonment.

Only two of these penalties came to fruition—the pillorying and the ear-shearing. Prynne was a dogged fighter and he circumvented his enemies in the end. A Don Quixote of the quill, he tilted at everything and tired out all his opponents until they left him at rest writing the histories of kings and serving on Parliamentary committees. He extracted from the national archives three volumes of supreme value to the historian. But he is chiefly remembered as a pilloried man who pilloried everyone.

## *MISS SPINK IS EXTRAVAGANT.*

BY W. M. LETTS.

LADY THOMPSON was being kind and Miss Spink was receiving kindness. Instead of reading to an irritable, deaf old lady in an overheated room for the bright length of a spring afternoon, Miss Spink was being entertained ; taken for a drive and given tea at the Manor Hotel, one of the lovely old houses where Henry VIII carried on his royal flirtation with Ann Boleyn. ‘ You know,’ said Lady Thompson, ‘ they used to walk up and down that very yew walk that we see from this window.’

The waiter wheeled round his trolley of cakes at this moment and the two ladies gave an interested attention to their choice.

Miss Spink was enjoying herself with the careful enjoyment of those who lead an austere life. Her treats were few, and when she got one she sucked its enjoyment as poor children suck their toffees.

The luxury of tea in an hotel was something that might not occur once in her year. Usually she had a disturbed tea with Lady Thompson’s mother before she returned to her duty of reading aloud to the old lady, who fell asleep for a chapter at a time and woke to complain of the incoherence and stupidity of the story. Miss Spink’s thoughts wandered to Alice, the house-parlourmaid, who was taking her place to-day. Poor Alice ! she would be tired by the time they came back. But meanwhile Emma Spink would enjoy herself perfectly, drop no crumb of this feast of life. All her senses were gratified. This panelled hall that still



kept the old pictures, its Spanish leather screens, its great chairs by the Tudor fireplace, enchanted her historic sense. The comfort of the warm room on a cool spring day, the hot tea, the pretty cakes, the thickly buttered toast were luxuries. Miss Spink for over fifty years had lived a frugal life. She did not have luxuries unless they were given to her. 'Doing without' had become a habit since her babyhood in a poor Parsonage. In her very modest bed-sitting-room she passed a good deal of her life ; it knew no luxury. Her one indulgence was a hot-water bottle which she filled for herself. But books (not the ones marked F for fiction) she considered a necessity—and she changed them every week at the Free Library. So the latest versions of history had not escaped her and she had read with an open mind all that could be told of the much-married king and poor Ann Boleyn.

Through her bifocal glasses she gazed through the mulioned windows at the lawns and walks of the old garden. Lady Thompson, who could not think of anything to discuss with one as familiar as a chair or table, poured out second cups of tea and looked at Miss Spink with some pity in her heart. Reading every afternoon to 'dear Mama' was not an easy task, but what, after all, would be the purpose of the Spinks of the world if these disagreeable duties did not fall to their share ? In the first place, what romance could ever fall to the lot of such a dull little woman ? Fate had made a joke of her at once—Spinkie, poor little Spinkie—that was all one could say. And as Miss Spink was not ornamental, surely she was only too glad to be useful. A little woman with pinched features, a pink nose, short-sighted eyes, straggly grey hair—what could she ask of life but the crumbs that fell unwanted from the tables of the ornamental and extravagant ? Unpleasant duties of

a domestic and parochial sort naturally fall to the lot of the plain and unalluring; for them is the tidying-up after the banquet enjoyed by their gay and lovely sisters. The contrast between herself and her mother's reader had struck Lady Thompson one day as they stood together in the hall near the long mirror. One did wonder, for a moment, why all the gifts from curly copper beech hair to polished filbert nails, with the gamut of lovely eyes, delicate features and a white column of neck—one did wonder why all should be crammed into the cradle of one child and the other grow up to be a Miss Spink, so entirely useful but with no temptation to folly, not even 'the one good feature.' This realisation of the caprices of Fate made Lady Thompson suggest this afternoon of driving, ending with the hotel tea, which to her was nothing of an adventure, while it made Miss Spink's nose grow pinker with excitement.

Having been consciously kind, Lady Thompson fell into silence, enjoying her cream cake and taking stock of the other guests at their several tables. She saw the usual British families making merry in their own restrained and rather self-conscious fashion. The couple who took tea in silence might be husband and wife. The two matrons were friends enjoying a gossip that must be malicious to make them so animated. Then there was the dark-haired girl who was Pallas Athene to Miss Spink and a rich young woman dressed in Paris to Lady Thompson. The girl wore no hat and suggested somehow by perfect ease of manner and a humorous commanding way with the waiter that she was a resident in the hotel. She talked a good deal to the man opposite to her. Lady Thompson thought that he looked distinguished and unhappy. She wished she could ask him to dinner. Miss Spink felt that she knew his face. It had some literary connection in her

mind. Ah ! now she had it. She had seen his likeness in a publisher's catalogue. He was the author of novels censored in 'Holy Ireland.' His name was . . . what was it ? G . . . it began with G. Now she found it. Gervase Gunn. Miss Spink had a mental life of keen interests and observation. She could be outside her body so completely that she almost forgot the little elderly spinster who played so humble a part in life. What a young, free-born creature the girl looked. Evidently she had always been favoured by Fortune, but she had taken her gifts so joyously that she had not grown dull like Lady Thompson ; for Miss Spink did not hesitate to judge her employer and label her 'beautiful but boring.' This girl had a sort of lazy animation that delighted the observant little woman. Could Ann Boleyn, she wondered, have been like that ? If so, one could think tolerantly of Henry until the moment when he turned unfaithful. The American girl looked up, caught Miss Spink's eye, enlarged by her spectacles, and smiled. It was a slow, very friendly smile as if they had met before and had some joke in common.

Lady Thompson interrupted the smile on Miss Spink's face.

'I think we ought to go. Alice may be tired of reading Mama the paper. Mama would like to see you before you go home. Yes, we must peep into the old dining-hall and just look at the yew walk. It is a pleasant place. I could quite enjoy staying here.'

They got up and went into the dark, stately hall. Miss Spink was already out on the path when the American girl followed her, holding a little, shabby, black silk bag.

'You left this under your chair,' she said, smiling down at the stranger, 'and you'll sure miss your handkerchief or your puff or something. So I've just brought it right along to you.'

Miss Spink felt that she loved the accent of U.S.A. when this large kind creature used it. But all she said was : 'Thank you, I'm so very much obliged to you.'

It was, however, at this moment that an idea, dismissed as extravagant and absurd during tea-time, again assailed Miss Spink. She had said to herself : 'If I had money to squander I should come here for a week.'

She picked up a tariff card in the hall. 'Terms from seven guineas a week,' she read as the car drew up before the door. She pocketed the card. Seven guineas was a sum that had to last Miss Spink for as many weeks of her frugal life, so the idea of squandering it in the mere luxury of one week was absurd. And yet, as she drove away, she saw herself as a visitor walking these paths, sitting under these great trees, talking to the American girl.

'A nice-looking creature . . . but the dreadful accent,' Lady Thompson murmured at her side ; 'they do dress well. I wonder who the man was . . . not American—interesting, I should think.'

. . . . .

Spring had nearly slipped into summer. But the evenings were cold enough for fires.

Lady Thompson's mother liked a large fire burning all day and she thought it foolish of Miss Spink to go to the window so often to look out.

'You'll catch a cold . . . and they're so infectious. You're hoarse to-day, I believe, I find it so hard to hear you.'

Miss Spink had thought that six o'clock would never come. Yet at last she was walking down the suburban road listening to the blackbird in the chestnut-tree, pausing to gaze at the silver and green perfection of a whitebeam, sniffing at the flowering currant over somebody's garden wall. She felt an elation that she could not explain. She

was no longer a weary elderly woman who earned money by duties that other people found too irksome; she was a bodiless spirit moving among the leafing trees, singing with the birds, blowing on the wind. The air was full of an exquisite promise, that elusive happiness that belongs to a south-west wind, to the little whispering song of a willow-warbler, to the rift of blue among dove-wing clouds.

Miss Spink expected nothing but her landlady's friendly greeting and her supper of cocoa and bread and butter. But she found a letter. It was a legal letter and precise in wording. Even at the third reading Miss Spink could see no other meaning but that a friend of her mother's had left her a hundred and fifty pounds. She pencilled it on the envelope—£150.

If one had £100 it had, of course, to be invested even if only £3 annually could result from it. But £50, part of that might be spent . . . might even be squandered. Emma Spink had a small, inherited income on which she could contrive to live even when employment ceased. She had saved too against the 'rainy day' of prudent proverb. Why was it always a rainy day, why not save to have a sunny day, a sunny week? A week—a week at a good hotel? In an exalted moment she had promised herself a week at the Manor Hotel—why not? She sat down in her window and looked out at the lovely green of the suburban trees. Her mind was poised for the flight of an adventure. But an hotel! One had to bring an evening dress, and a new coat and hat would be necessary. What of it? She had the money.

Emma Spink sat by her open window making her plans until the scented twilight fell and she switched on her light and wrote a letter to the Manor Hotel engaging a seven-guinea room for one week.

This was the time, for Lady Thompson had gone abroad, and 'dear Mama' was paying an annual visit, much dreaded by all concerned, to another married daughter. Miss Spink was unwanted, forgotten, her own mistress. She could set forth on her extravagant week without confession to anybody.

The next day she went out with several pounds in her pocket and took a train to town. She went by tube to Kensington High Street. For a time she wandered, looking eagerly into the windows for garments subdued yet becoming and of the most moderate price. She had a great dread of those lovely young blondes, red of nail and red of lip, creatures who condescend to ask if they can help 'Modom' in her choice. When at last she sought the department for evening dresses, she steered her way almost fiercely towards a grey-haired, kind-faced woman in black. Miss Spink explained a little breathlessly, 'an evening dress, a black one, lace or perhaps velvet, I hardly know which, but it must be at a very moderate price.' She explained that it was for dinner wear, at an hotel. The grave kind eyes were summing her up.

'Yes, I think we have the very thing for Madam, and really quite a bargain. It was a misfit, a little bit small for the lady. It may be large for Madam, but it could be altered. Just come to the dressing-room and we'll try it on.' The grey-haired assistant while searching for likely dresses encountered one of those young blondes whom Miss Spink so dreaded.

'What does old Aunt Maria want to-day?' asked the young and lovely one who was attending to her blood-red nails.

'What are *you* talking about, miss? Who's Aunt Maria?'

‘Well, she looks like somebody’s ancestor, don’t she ? Parisian Model, I suppose ?’

‘Look here, my girl, I know a lady when I meet one and I know how to treat her. Some of you young ones never saw a real lady.’

Young Miss Taylor accepted elderly Miss Smith’s snub with a shrug and giggle. Miss Smith returned to the dressing-room to find Emma Spink in her grey celanese petticoat. The black lace dress was slipped over her head. The two women looked into the long mirror.

‘Now *that* is Madam’s style exactly, just the thing I’d advise for a dinner dress. Shall I call the fitter and have these few alterations done ?’

The fitter and Miss Smith were friends. They were middle-aged and kindly. They took an interest in the little elderly woman and her projected holiday and Miss Spink asked about their holidays, and soon knew quite a lot about them both, so that the fitting ended in a friendly conference. Miss Smith offered advice. What about a black and white foulard silk for day wear with a black coat and a black and white hat ? She knew the very dress and it was so reasonable too. You had to know the stock to put your finger on the very thing.

Miss Spink was spending fast, but she knew that these purchases would do duty for years. Miss Smith was not content until she had conducted her customer to the hat department and consigned her to the care of a pretty young woman who met her with a smile.

‘Miss Cooper, I want you to find Madam a black straw with black and white trimming, ribbons or mount perhaps. It must be just Madam’s style, Miss Cooper ; don’t waste time in trying on these things——’ Miss Smith waved her hand towards the airy vagaries of fashion that pretty

young typists perch on their heads. Miss Cooper, looking at the customer, remembered a grand-aunt who taught in Sunday School and gave her five shillings every Christmas. She knew what would suit that small grey head, the brim that would shade the spectacled eyes. She was kind, almost filial in her zeal to get just the right thing at a small price. Miss Spink flushed with extravagance and excitement, thanked the girl and went out well pleased to get a cup of coffee and a bun, for one can at least save on one's lunch.

So, a few days later, with her purchases in her suit-case and hat-box, Miss Spink drove up to the Manor Hotel. The hall-porter had no idea that the little lady for No. 17, quiet little spinster as she looked, was quivering with a sense of adventure. Everything was exciting, the shallow stairs, the dark polished boards; the pretty bedroom looking down upon flowering chestnut-trees, and along the famous yew walk where the royal rascal courted poor Ann. Miss Spink's suit-case was heavier with history books than with clothes. She could unpack in a few minutes and range her books about her. Her mother's photograph she brought with her always.

'Darling, darling mother! If only you could share this with me,' Emma Spink whispered, remembering the deprivations of the Parsonage.

Could the human race but purr, it is certain that Miss Spink would have raised a very rumble of content. She sat by the open window in an easy chair until it was time to dress for dinner; then she got into the lace dress, clasped her mother's seed pearls about her neck, pinned a pearl brooch into the lace at her breast and went shyly but gaily down to the dining-room.

A man and woman were finishing a seven-o'clock dinner at a table near hers. In a flash, in spite of short sight, Miss



Spink recognised them. It was the American girl and her former companion, the author, Gervase Gunn. The elderly lady bowed with a nervous little gesture of recognition. The young American jumped up and came to her with outstretched hand.

‘Well, isn’t that just too splendid? You’ve come back again? I saw you loved this place. You’re like me, it just gets me all the time—poor Ann Boleyn and that great fat Henry . . . I shiver, but I look for them every moonlight night. You’re spending the night? A week! But that’s marvellous! We’ll have a wonderful time together. You haven’t brought the Countess this time?’

‘Lady Thompson?’ Miss Spink corrected. ‘She’s not a countess, a knight’s widow.’

‘Is that so? Well, she looks a countess, but just a wee bit heavy as some of your wonderful British aristocrats do. Now it’s too bad I’m going to the theatre on your first night, but Mr. Gunn and I have a date together. Oh! you don’t know Mr. Gunn? But that’s fine, for I’ll introduce you. Miss . . . Miss . . . why! I don’t think I ever heard your name.’

‘Spink.’

‘Miss Spink, meet Mr. Gervase Gunn, the author of all those simply marvellous novels.’

Mr. Gervase Gunn bowed as coldly as Miss Spink did. They showed no sign of mutual interest and the big girl looked a little downcast. ‘I guess you don’t know my name either,’ she began; ‘it’s Ann Chance and I’m an American. But we’ll talk later, won’t we? I’m afraid your soup has been getting cold.’

Miss Spink watched them drive away together.

‘Dear me! nearly as bad as Henry VIII and Ann Boleyn,’ she said to herself.

To Ann Chance, Mr. Gunn was gloomy.

'Why this sudden craze for elderly oddities?' he asked.

'But she isn't odd, she's a type.'

'An abhorrent type—the elderly spinster of Britain, narrow, boring, Philistine, a brake on the wheels of progress. You only encouraged her out of caprice, just to annoy me.'

Ann Chance laughed and let the car out at top speed because it made Mr. Gunn nervous.

'But you're all wrong,' she explained; 'if I were a great author like you I'd study all types. You only care about the non-moral. Well, that old lady is what I call a *real* old lady, the sort my mother used to meet in England. I'm going to study her.'

'Your tastes are original—I'd call her the obvious type of a boring old maid—curate's help, secretary to all the Tame Tabby societies. Why must we discuss her?'

'You started it, Gervase, so I'm going on. I've a queer feeling about that old lady. I had the day I saw her. I kind of feel she's going to influence my life. I never expected to see her here again, I thought she was somebody's companion, but she seems to be here on her own and I'm going to give her a good time, driving around while you write your novel.'

'You know I can't write, Ann, while you keep me in suspense. This ghastly waiting for your decision is wrecking me. If you'd only be brave, live your life, come to me, live adventurously, I could write. The greatest novel of the decade should be dedicated to you. But you love to play the cat's game, to tantalise your victim. You and I could do anything. I'm a free man now.'

'You made your wife divorce you?'

'Made? Sheila was reasonable and saw how unsuited

we were. We each resolved to live our own life. It was entirely for the best. A man cannot wreck his career for domesticities. You are wiser in America about these affairs.'

Ann Chance, guiding her car, smiled to herself and then in other interests she forgot Miss Spink.

One of the extravagances of the extravagant week was to be 'early tea.' Never had Miss Spink had tea brought to her bedside and it seemed to her the luxury most desirable. To sit up in her little pink flannel bedjacket and sip her tea slowly and read a book before she got up, this was to taste the delights of the rich. The maid who brought her tray was an Irish girl. Miss Spink soon found that her name was Bridey and that she came from Wicklow. She was a red-headed, confidential girl, very ready to talk. She pulled open the curtains and raised the blind, telling Miss Spink all about the lovely May morning.

'Miss Chance is goin' out riding,' she went on: 'I brought her her tea a while back. She's a lovely young lady and as simple as a child. God send she's not too simple for some. Anyone would take to her—she's so easy, always the one way, and for all she's so rich she's plain; you wouldn't find a plainer young lady.'

A voice gay as Pippa's when she passed came from the corridor.

'Bridey, I believe you're talking about me! Is that Miss Spink's room and may I come in?'

Emma Spink thought of Atalanta, then corrected herself, for Atalanta did not wear riding coat and breeches. A Valkyrie? Diana of the Crossways? The radiant morning sat down without more ado on her bed.

'I'm going for my morning ride,' she said, 'but I want to

have a date with you. Suppose we drive this afternoon : Shall we go to Knole or Penshurst : I'll be your guide to English history. My ! wouldn't that be fun, an American teaching a real true Britisher history : And I guess you're a conservative. You sit out under the trees this lovely morning and read your books and the paper and I'll come right along to you about eleven and we'll make our plans.'

So, amazingly to Emma Spink, the day began and so each day continued. It was one of the perfect weeks of early summer when each cloudless day rises from the morning mists and lingers until the sun sinks into an amber west. Either in the morning or in the afternoon she drove out in the gay sports car that looked the antithesis of Miss Spink's elderly figure. With Ann Chance she lunched in pleasant old English inns or had tea in sunny gardens under flowering chestnut-trees. And during these golden hours she learnt very much of the American's past life in her own home and in Europe and of her indecision about the future. She should marry, but of course she must marry. But the man was the problem. She wanted a man with a career. Her money, her energy could help the right man. If she liked him she would never rest until he was in the foremost rank of fame.

'How you could help a doctor !' Miss Spink exclaimed, as they sat discussing the matter under the trees.

Ann Chance started.

'Whatever makes you suggest a doctor ?' she asked. 'I'd hate the life—a man who's always late for dinner and can never keep a date, and always thinking of other people's diseases. Oh no, Miss Spink, you must try again. What about a literary man ? Couldn't I help him ? I could take him everywhere. I'd have a *salon* for him. He should know everyone, go everywhere—I'd criticise his books——'

‘But, my dear, he’d hate that. Surely husbands don’t allow criticism?’

The American opened her lovely mouth.

‘My! Aren’t you perfectly Teutonic? My husband would just be spoonfed with criticism.’

The girl returned rather moodily to the doctor topic.

‘I knew a boy at home. He would be a doctor and now he thinks of nothing else—post-graduate courses, rickets at Vienna, gynæcology in Dublin. I don’t think his old friends weigh a straw with him against his profession.’

‘That is fine,’ said Miss Spink.

‘His wife would have to give up too much.’

‘Think how a clever, energetic woman can help a man like that. She makes the happy home background that he needs so badly. She entertains for him. If she does not share his work, she makes his life a thing of joy, not toil.’

Ann shook her head.

‘Perhaps if I saw him . . . I mean perhaps if I met that type of man again I’d have the courage to marry him. But “out of sight, out of mind,” you know, Spinkie dear.’

She went off across the levels of sunny grass. And so ended the last day but one.

The last day began as usual with Bridey and the tea-tray.

Miss Spink awoke with a consciousness of finality. ‘My last day, Bridey!’

‘I wish it were your first, miss. We’ll be terrible quiet without you.’

‘Quiet? Why? Am I so noisy?’

‘I mean lonesome, miss. And Miss Chance will be lonesome. What will she do at all?’

‘But Miss Chance is never lonesome. Everyone runs after her.’

‘Some runs too hard.’

Bridey came back from the washstand and stood by the bed.

‘Miss, for God’s sake, can you not save Miss Chance from that man? I’m telling you the truth, he’s no husband for her. He’s bad—as bad as the egg I had for me breakfast just now. I know it, for me own cousin was general to him and the wife.’

‘Do you mean Mr. Gunn, Bridey?’

‘I do so. The man’s a villiyain. Me cousin said the wife was a dear little one, plain and good, an’ she did everything for Mr. Gunn. She’d eat margarine all war-time to give him the little butter that was in it. An’ the children were dotes. But for all that he must be after other women, spendin’ the money on them that should a clothed his own family. Looka, miss, I saw them out last night on the yew walk and you should speak before you go.’

‘I’ll see, Bridey. I must act carefully.’

‘But your last day, miss——’

Her last day—Miss Spink had learnt the economy of enjoyment that extracts the last drop of its flavour. She determined to spend the day in quiet contemplation of its bliss, in recollection of the past week. Accordingly she took her books out to the shade of the chestnut and sat down there. To her came Ann Chance, dressed it seemed for town.

‘Spinkie dear, it’s too disappointing. I was going to spend all the day with you, but I’ve had a letter from a cousin who’s in London for the day. I just have to meet her for lunch at one-thirty at the Overseas Club. She says she’ll expect me. But I’ll come back in the afternoon to take you out.’

‘My dear, I’m perfectly happy. Go with my blessing.’

‘Mr. Gunn may be out . . .’

‘He can leave me any message for you.’

Ann laughed sardonically and went off, her tall white figure catching the light as she moved. The sports car buzzed away and Miss Spink was alone.

But not for long was she to be alone. The Hotel Buttons came to her across the grass. Miss Spink had given him toffee and he liked her.

‘Excuse me, Madam, there’s a telephone message for Miss Chance, and the porter thought you might be meeting her before she comes back here.’

‘What is it, Jim?’

‘It’s from Mr. Gunn. He’ll meet Miss Chance at the Dover Street Tube at seven o’clock, and to remind her that it’s his lecture night.’

‘Very well, thank you, Jim. I’ll write it down.’

An hour of peaceful reading and meditation slid by. Then again came interruption. This time the figure that came towards her was strange, a tall young man in a light grey suit. He looked very spring-like and young. He carried his hat and he smiled before he reached her.

He spoke in the accent of America.

‘Do forgive me for interrupting you, but I came to see Miss Ann Chance, and the hotel porter says you know all her plans and that you might help me to find her. The bother is that I’m going on to Vienna to-morrow night and I want to see Ann . . . She and I were schoolmates, way back in history.’

Miss Spink laughed up at him through her bifocal glasses.

‘That wasn’t very long back,’ she said.

She gave him her hand and he bowed over it as if she were a princess. Emma Spink realised the deference to woman still left in a pioneering people. She marvelled, for she

accepted the British-Teutonic attitude to her sex when plain and elderly, a relegation to the serviceable order.

‘You’re going for a post-graduate course?’ she asked.

‘My! But you must be a psychic! How do you know that I’m a doctor?’

‘I knew it at once . . . I just felt it.’

The young man sat down on the garden seat beside her. His clever, boyish face was beaming.

‘Anything else you know, wise woman?’ he asked.

‘I might. I’ve never tried Palmistry, but I’d like to read your hand.’

‘Sure! do. Come right along with it.’

‘You’re a doctor . . . very keen on your profession. You were in Dublin lately for a course. I see marks of perseverance, some obstinacy. You must guard against pride. You . . . you wouldn’t like to be beholden to a woman for help in . . . say, your profession, or in any financial way. But you have great capacity for love and faithfulness. If you loved a woman she would be your one star.’

The young man nodded and sighed.

‘That sounds like Richard Charteris all right.’

‘You are an idealist. But you must grasp your star. I see a danger. You have an enemy who threatens what you love best.’

‘An enemy? I didn’t know it.’

‘I’m not sure that you know him. I think not. But he is an evil influence threatening someone you love.’

The young man looked profoundly serious. He gazed into the spectacled eyes.

‘What do you see for me . . . fortune or misfortune?’

‘The future is vague. You are at the cross-roads now. All turns on yourself, the road you take. I can’t tell you more, you’ve come to the critical time.’



Dr. Charteris left his hand in hers.

‘You’re evidently a seer. How could you know I was in Dublin? Tell me one more thing. Can you say where Ann Chance is at the moment?’

‘Not at the moment. I know you will find her at the Overseas Club for lunch at one-thirty. If I were you I should go at once.’

‘You won’t think me abrupt? I’m overwhelmed with gratitude. You seem a good angel and a sibyl combined. *Au revoir.*’

Emma Spink watched the tall buoyant figure striding towards the gate.

‘My dear Emma,’ she said softly, ‘who would think it of you? Match-making, advising . . . oh! this wonderful week. I shall never mind dull times again.’

True to her word, Ann Chance came back at tea-time. She had the young doctor with her. She came across the grass to the tea-table.

‘I knew you’d influence my life,’ she said; ‘I had a hunch that time I saw you first. Now, Spinkie dear, we’re going to have a little dinner together, just we three. We’ll have cocktails first and champagne to pledge the most marvellous friendship. This doctor of mine is head over ears for you. He says you’re the most intuitive, enchanting woman he’s met—except me.’

Miss Spink beamed.

‘My dear, you charming young Americans drink too much alcohol. With your buoyancy and vitality you don’t need it. And I’ve no head nor wish for cocktails or champagne. Isn’t happiness enough?’

‘As you like, Spinkie dear, always wise. But we’ll take you a lovely drive after dinner.’

‘No, Ann. I shall be busy packing and I want to rest. You will drive to Penshurst with Dr. Charteris. You will tell him about Sir Philip Sydney—there’ll be lots to talk about.’

Ann removed her cigarette to stoop and kiss the elderly lady.

‘Very well ! But we’ll come back and tell you all about it, so don’t go to bed too early. Sit in my room with the wireless.’

‘I will. I’ll wait for you.’

So it was that Miss Spink sat through the sunsetting hour by Ann’s window. She saw the sky turn amber and the west, blue as a scilla, flush to a faint pink. Then the time of silhouettes came softly. The dark planes of the cedars were inky black against the burning copper of the low sky. It was after ten o’clock and Miss Spink still sat dreaming when a very angry man burst into the room. He only saw a figure on the sofa.

‘Ann !’ he exclaimed, ‘why didn’t you come ? I waited for you at Dover Street. I’d no time for dinner, I . . .’

Then he noticed the silhouetted head of the woman by the window, the sleek curve of it, the skimpy bob behind.

‘Oh ! I beg your pardon, Miss Spink. I thought Miss Chance was here.’

‘She has gone out, Mr. Gunn. She went out after dinner.’

‘I don’t understand. She was to meet me at Dover Street and dine. She was coming to my lecture on modern authors. I waited for a dozen trains and had no time for dinner. Did she not get my message ?’

‘She got it too late, Mr. Gunn. She was out in the afternoon with a friend from America.’

‘Why was the message not given to her at once?’

‘Because I had the message and thought Miss Chance too busy to attend to it.’

Gervase Gunn came nearer. A youthful habit of shouting when angry returned to him.

‘Too busy to attend to me? What do you mean, Madam? What right have you anyhow to decide for her or for me? Your damned interference may have wrecked two lives.’

Miss Spink turned towards him; her face was flushed, but he only saw it shadowed and menacing.

‘You needn’t shout, Mr. Gunn, I can hear perfectly. And please restrain your language. Of what are you complaining?’

‘I complain of an old maid like you coming here for a week and trying to poke her finger into the destiny of others. You may have wrecked things too deep for your vulgar understanding. Who is this American friend you’re gabbling about?’

‘A Dr. Charteris who seems to have known Miss Chance from childhood. I gather that they are engaged. If I were you, Mr. Gunn, I should go home. You are upsetting yourself and being very discourteous.’

‘Discourteous! Do you know what this “upset,” as you call it, means to me? What do you know of love in your arid life?’

‘Nothing, perhaps, Mr. Gunn. But I believe you have known the love of a most excellent wife. You threw it away. Now as Miss Chance may be late, I won’t detain you.’

Miss Spink heard the door bang. She turned her face to the twilight, to the scent of the cluster roses, to the zigzag flight of a bat. She laughed softly and pulled her shawl round her, for the evening wind was cool.

‘Poor Ann Boleyn,’ she murmured, ‘if only someone had warned you.’

A clock struck ten. It reminded her that the extravagant week was all but over.

### IN THE WILY NIGHT.

*These are the hours of pebbled dreams,  
with a lullay, ly, lo in the wily night,  
and candleless we make our way,  
a battered cloud clutched in our hand,  
on our lips the rasp of sand  
pricking away the saffron light;  
still sleep amberly, lullay.*

*Beguiled by a too long Lethe, oh,  
with a lullay, ly, lo in the wily night  
whose owl will hoot the moon away,  
while we glide with a silken speed  
wherever the spell of rose should lead;  
a prickled depth, a breathless height,  
nor break the reverie, lullay !*

*We cannot face the slapping sun,  
with a lullay, ly, lo from the wily night;  
and burned by the half-expected day  
our hearts must be cut by different knives—  
new lords toss dice for our frightened lives;  
so melts the restless, brief delight—  
whisper soft, lullay, lullay.*

ELIZABETH JOHNSON.

### *BY THE WAY.*

‘MAD as a March hare’—‘merry as the March wind’—various are the adjectives by which poets, and lesser folk, have tried to describe the month to which the world has now come. What is the most fitting adjective for March, 1938? We used to speak of ‘the year of grace’—we must find a new language to-day. Wars that have never been declared continue to be waged, countries heave and rock, governments and heads fall, surrealists hold exhibitions undismayed. A mad world, perhaps; a merry one, certainly not. As private individuals and as members of corporations assessed for the National Defence Contribution we have each and all of us helped to make—well, if not the world safe for democracy, at any rate our own loved country safe against aggression. Let us be of good heart: that is done, our depleted bank balances prove it, it is in the past, the worst quarter of the year, financially and atmospherically, is well advanced, the days are lengthening, buds are breaking, Spring is at hand, there is Hope for all, even if there is not Peace.

\*            \*            \*

A well-known writer, recently reviewing—as is the present exceedingly bad custom—the latest book of another well-known writer in a similar field to his own, contrasted it with a former book from the same pen in the following words, ‘He is not writing, as there, with an icicle dipped in a bed of tulips.’ I cannot recall anyone ever trying to write with an icicle, but, if anyone did and by way of preparation—or in a moment of absent-mindedness—dipped

it in a bed of tulips (or, for that matter, turnips—either would have precisely the same result), he would find as a consequence that he had succeeded only in making an earthy smudge upon the paper. And that, it is quite clear from the second sentence, ‘he writes confidentially and quietly as though he were explaining the pictures to a possibly impatient young draughtsman,’ was not in the least what the reviewer intended to convey. But what did he intend to convey? I have an uneasy feeling that the only possible comment upon his sentence is that historically made by Macaulay when Robert Montgomery rashly imagined ‘streams meandering level with their fount,’ namely—‘now this I take to be the very worst similitude in the world.’

★            ★            ★

As, during the last hundred years, old files, memoranda, and bundles of letters have yielded up their secrets to skilled investigation, gradually every detail of those days, memorable in the history of English literature, which saw the successive deaths in rapid succession of Keats, Shelley, and Byron, has become the property of the reading world—and not as concerning the three poets only, but the many women of importance to them also. Last year saw, as regards Keats, the publication both of the letters of Fanny Brawne and Fanny Keats and of Marie Adami’s completion of her researches into the life story of the latter and the letters from John, now the property of the British nation; the many-sided archives of Albemarle Street have fully revealed the numerous inamorata of Byron; and now R. Glynn Grylls has published *Mary Shelley* (Oxford University Press, 18s. n.), a brilliant study including much new correspondence and other material placed at the biographer’s disposal by Sir John Shelley-Rolls. The result is a definitive reconstruction: all the personages come vividly to life and

even the well-known facts of the tragedy of Lerici Bay acquire fresh significance, presented throughout through the mind of Mary. This is indeed a notable piece of literary biography: Byron, it is true, comes out very badly, his comment to Hoppner on the Shelleys is even more unforgivable than his refusal, after Shelley's death, to repay Mary the money he owed her—it was supplied to her need by Trelawney—but Mary herself is securely established with her fine mind and generous heart, no shadowy figure but a living, loving, and, in later life, proud and courageous woman whose fortunes, even apart from the perennial interest attaching to Shelley, it was eminently worth while thus to present: and the book is none the worse for occasional caustic *obiter dicta*, as, for instance, the statement 'loyalty like gratitude is a bastard virtue that dishonours both its parents'; holding this unusual view, the author's praise is given to Mary, not for her loyalty to Shelley's memory, but for her appreciation of his uniqueness—and no doubt from a biographical point of view she is right.

\*            \*            \*

In spite of the essential sanity of all great poets (and this is not falsified, but confirmed even by Shelley) it is a tenaciously rooted popular conviction that everyone of a poetical turn of mind must necessarily fly into passions, throw things about and generally behave in a way quite unsuited to rational life. All those who hold such a conviction may at any rate rest with satisfaction upon the habits of Verlaine and Rimbaud. Immoral, drunken, orgiastic, violent, and degraded throughout all the days of their association together, the two French poets supply an abundance of powder and shot to all objectors to poetry. In a biography in miniature which he has called *Sketch for a Portrait of Rimbaud* (Brendin Publishing Co., 3s. 6d.), Hum-

phrey Hare has set down all that need be known about the life of that precocious phenomenon of whom it can be said, 'he was not yet twenty-six but already the poet had been dead for seven years': Mr. Hare's attempt is to reconcile the youth lusting in his teens for power in terms of poetry and the traveller scornful of poetry continuing his restless life until his death in misery, aged thirty-seven. It is an interesting, though hardly edifying, little study.

★       ★       ★

A recent autobiography of interest which is mainly literary—though the author, over age at the time, served with distinction in the War—is Mr. W. B. Maxwell's *Time Gathered* (Hutchinson, 10s. 6d. n.). Mr. Maxwell brings to the record of his personal experiences not merely the practised pen which has served him so well as a novelist but an individuality which has brought him in contact ever since his childhood with people of note in many professions. The son of M. E. Braddon whom, as he records, he adored from an early age, he was set by inheritance as well as predilection—though he began as an artist—amongst all the people prominent in literary circles from Wilkie Collins onwards; and this 'very strong interest that I took in all sorts of people,' as he says of himself, has lasted until the present time. The result is a gallery of lightly and vivaciously depicted people, portrayed with interest and without malice: Mr. Maxwell concludes by setting down kindness as the main lesson he has learnt on his journey through life.

★       ★       ★

From the house of Longmans come two novels of crime to which attention may fitly be drawn. They are totally dissimilar, but are on that very account worth reading as a pair—a study in contrast which might perhaps not inap-



propriately be called the contrast between the professional and the amateur—not the professional and the amateur, as might be supposed, in matters literary, but the professional and the amateur in crime. The two books are *The Wheels*, by James Spenser, and *The Guilt is Plain*, by David Frome (both 7s. 6d. n.): both have published books before, several of them, and are therefore no novices in book construction; but there is no reason to suppose that Mr. David Frome has ever been personally experienced in criminal achievement, whereas Mr. James Spenser, the author of 'Limey' and other autobiography, has revealed with unusual frankness his own years in the underworld both of England and America. *The Wheels* is not autobiography any more: it is a fictional representation of the underworld, presented by one who writes of what he knows—no doubt, for the purposes of fiction, the colours are all heightened, but it is none the worse for that: it is skilfully told and quite as exciting a yarn as any reasonable reader could possibly demand; in fact, of its kind it is extraordinarily good, and not the least interesting part is the evidence marshalled both of the efficiency of Scotland Yard and of the often-ignored truth that, whereas the detective can afford to lose, occasionally, the criminal who loses, if only once, is deprived for a considerable time of further opportunities for crime. *The Guilt is Plain* is crime invented, not experienced, but it is very ingeniously invented. There is the usual murder in a public place with whole batches of possible murderers; it is followed by a second, and throughout all the investigations into these and into the habits of a household of which every member is, if not unbalanced, at any rate extremely peculiar, wanders the absurd little Evan Pinkerton and the misleading passivity of Inspector Bull. Maybe, the story is over-elaborate, but many readers like that, and it is all

worked out ingeniously to the concluding satisfaction of all—save the perpetrator.

★       ★       ★

Readers of CORNHILL will also be glad to have their attention drawn to the appearance of two other books which, for all their differences, have points in common. Both are essentially collections of short stories—though the first has an underlying unity of place and purpose—and both are by writers whose work has long been familiar to, and appreciated by, readers of CORNHILL. The first is M. de B. Daly's *The Ant's Nest* (Duckworth, 7s. 6d. n.) and the second Richard Findlay's *Quest* (Murray, 7s. 6d. n.). The title chosen by Miss Daly is perhaps a trifle misleading : it suggests a scene of workers—it is in truth Sant'Anna, on the Italian Riviera, where few work and all gossip : there are eight studies of the result, two of which originally appeared in these pages, studies mainly of femininity told with a keen power of observation and animated by more than a little of the spirit of satire. They make excellent light reading. Mr. Findlay's vein is sterner : through each of his stories runs the spirit not of satire but of adventure, death braved on land and sea and in air : often he achieves his most dramatic effects by an economy of statement, a directness, almost a simplicity, as though that which he is narrating was inevitable. For all the host who attempt them, the real writers of short stories are always few : in her own line, Miss Daly proves herself a delicate and successful artist ; in his, there are several stories and not a few passages which almost suggest that upon Mr. Findlay may be descending a part of the mantle that was Kipling's—and not only is his knowledge of the air first-hand, but his use of it first-rate.

## THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

## DOUBLE ACROSTIC, No. 173.

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answers, containing the coupon from page iv, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach him by 30th March.

'Let us drink and be merry, dance, joke and rejoice  
With ——— and ———, theorbo and voice !'

1. 'Ye blessèd ———, I have heard the call  
Ye to each other make ; I see  
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee ;'
2. 'What men or gods are these ? What maidens ——— :  
What mad pursuit ?'
3. 'With frogs for their watch-dogs  
All night ———'
4. 'He tore out a reed, the great god Pan  
From the deep cool bed of the ——— ;'
5. 'No Nightingale did ——— chaunt  
More welcome notes to weary bands'
6. 'Odours, when sweet violets sicken,  
Live within the sense ——— quicken'

Answer to Acrostic 171, January number : 'Like *music* on my *heart*' (Coleridge : 'The Ancient Mariner'). 1. *MucH* (Robert Southey : 'His Books'). 2. *UsE* (Landor : 'Mother, I cannot mind my wheel'). 3. *SophonisbA* (Sir John Suckling : 'A Doubt of Martyrdom'). 4. *IngloR(ious)* (Gray's 'Elegy'). 5. *ClefT* ('The Ancient Mariner').

The first correct answers opened were sent by Mrs. M. H. Pearce, 35 Utttoxeter Road, Mickleover, and N. P. Cowan, Esq., British Consulate, Port Said, Egypt, who are invited to choose books as mentioned above. N.B.—*Sources need not be given.*

# THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

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APRIL 1938.

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## CARLYLEAN COURTSHIP.

BY E. THORNTON COOK.

### CHAPTER XV.

#### CAPITULATION.

THE weather was bad and the Pentonville rooms cheerless. Continuous work took its usual toll and the rat began to gnaw once more, sorely straining Carlyle's faith in Dr. Badams' expressed conviction that there was no specially deranged organ in his patient's lean frame, but merely an overworked system of nerves. Irving's sympathy seemed perfunctory and the tormented man lost his temper. He might seem an ill-conditioned person, but let it be understood that this was due to physical reasons, and that such disturbances as he suffered were the heaviest calamity which the law of life had in store for mortals. When *well* he was a very decent character. As things were, he felt more like a demon in a place of woe than a man in the land of the living—and small wonder ! For days he had had no leisure to think of anything but pain, and he had lain through sleepless nights counting the pulses of his own sick heart till the gloom of external things extended to the very centre of his mind.

Considerably perturbed, Irving went to Mrs. Montague, who promptly tried to effect a rescue, but Carlyle remained entrenched, vowing that a man who failed to stand on his own feet in economic affairs soon ceased to be a man at all.

He held out a few more weeks ; then, feeling his way

back to his lodgings through a thick fog, decided that London had no right life in it. The atmosphere was like ink and he wished James Carlyle could see Holborn as he saw it at that moment with wains, coaches, sheep, oxen and wild people rushing in all directions, bellowing and shrieking amid the thundering din of traffic.

Cold and miserable, he stumbled on through the mean streets of Pentonville and found his own door, near which a hen was briskly pecking, finding a cheerful living among refuse.

How was it that a creature with scarcely a thimbleful of brains seemed able to regulate its life better than he did? Carlyle asked himself as he awaited admission.

‘In God’s name concentrate whatever reason thou hast!’ he cried to himself, entering his chilly room. ‘Direct it on the one thing most needful. Plan your life, decide, ACT.’

He sat hunched in a chair for an hour, swearing to recover health if it meant cutting ditches for a livelihood; he would live no longer with an infernal nightmare paralysing his faculties of mind and heart. Let the cost be what it might, he would be free as were other sons of Adam. It ought to be possible to engage with some literary tradesman for a full translation of all Schiller’s works, settle in Annandale with the necessary apparatus at hand, live frugally, write, read, ride and dig till he was a well man once more. Had he land he would turn farmer; it would be pleasant to ride out early in the morning and appear among his lazy hinds like a destroying angel; he would quicken every sluggish hand, clear, till, plant, create a veritable garden around him, then work at literature. Then, if he did nothing noteworthy, it were his own fault.

‘I’ll *gar* myself do it!’ he announced to his flickering candle. ‘I am sick and must recover. Till then my mind

lies spellbound and the thought of writing is drudgery. If there be sleep and quiet and free air to be had on earth, I'll have them, though I scratch for my living like that symbolic hen.' He would live in no more lodgings with sluttish landladies, but have a household of his own, were it no bigger than a cynic's tub.

He must write to Mainhill—and what would Jane think of his plan?

Carlyle opened his desk, and there among his papers lay a little white heart. He picked it up and saw a single word written across it in so small a script as to be almost indecipherable, and yet he could swear that the handwriting was Jane's.

'Homeless!' He read the word with difficulty. 'Homeless!' Was Jane's own heart seeking a secure refuge? Oh, he wanted her, he needed her every hour! But how had the little messenger reached him? Could it have fallen unnoticed from one of Jane's letters? Had she sent it to him by accident or design? Laying the pathetic little symbol against his own heart, Thomas Carlyle wrote to Jane.

Jane was at home once more, the unwilling mentor of Dugald's sister Caroline. The contents of the girl's large black trunk made chaos in Jane's room; her clothes, drawings, shoes, gloves, artificial flowers and beads lay jumbled about in piles. At night she borrowed Jane's nightcaps and by day her combs.

'She steals my needles and pins! She takes possession of everything belonging to me!' cried Jane in exasperation.

'You must teach her method,' answered Mrs. Welsh coolly.

'It is impossible to teach her anything,' retorted Jane.

‘Day after day I expend time and temper upon her, trying to lighten the Cimmerian darkness of her understanding, but totally without result. I explain, repeat, lecture and scold as long as I have any lungs left, but it’s no use, mamma.’

‘She is very good-humoured,’ said Mrs. Welsh with unusual placidity.

‘She is mean, cunning, disgustingly greedy, ungrateful, stupid—and downright rude to Shandy!’ answered Jane, gathering her dog into her arms. ‘How much longer are you going to let her remain here, mamma?’

But Mrs. Welsh was not to be drawn and Jane fled as Dugald arrived ostensibly to see his sister, but Jane anticipated another proposal.

Temporarily free of Caroline, her thoughts turned to Thomas Carlyle, who had so lamentably failed to find some well-paid sinecure post. No, she could not explain how that heart—which was most certainly hers—had found its way into his desk. Most curious! By the way, if he *wished* to turn farmer and devote himself to improving land, why should he not undertake the regeneration of her Nithsdale property?

Carlyle’s reply was startling in its decisiveness. Since Jane had land requiring attention the way seemed plain. Where was it? He would send his brother to take the place immediately and then Alick and he together would prepare it for her. Would she come to him there?

‘Let us learn through one another what it is to live,’ wrote Thomas Carlyle earnestly. ‘Literature, which we are both bent on pursuing, will not alone nourish the human spirit; it is the wine of life, it cannot be its food. Come to my heart never more to leave me, whatever fate betide us.’ . . .

He had ordinary faculties, Carlyle told himself, walking up and down his narrow lodging, and ordinary diligence ; thousands managed their lives on resources more slender than his. If he and Jane loved one another and determined to discharge their respective duties—if he laboured manfully to provide, and she dispensed with wifely prudence, they should have nothing to fear.

He *would* recover health ; he would *not* degenerate into that wretched thing, an author scribbling for the sake of filthy lucre.

‘ I will be a man in spite of destiny,’ he wrote. ‘ It lies with you, my dearest, to decide whether I shall be a *right-man* or only a hard and bitter stoic. You love me, do you not ? . . . Dare you trust your fate to me as I trust you with mine ? ’ He would dig and delve with twice the energy if it were for Jane.

Half-frightened by the tempest she had aroused, Jane shut herself into the little room behind the dining-room which she had claimed as a sanctum, and tried to think. A few months ago she would have derided the notion of marriage with such a man ; now it seemed her probable destiny, though she could not determine how this had come about. Did she love him, or was she attracted solely by his intellect ? She was not ‘ in love,’ of that she was sure, nor was she lying under the delusion that she could direct his life according to her whim.

Aware of her own lack of fortitude under petty tribulation, she thought of Craigenputtock, the empty farm lying isolated high among the hills, surely the most barren spot in Dumfriesshire.

‘ I would as soon think of building myself a nest on the Bass Rock—I could not spend a month there with an angel ! ’ Jane told herself, striving for candour. No ! If



Thomas Carlyle was determined to play the part of Cincinnatus it must not be among the heather and black peat-moss of 'the Hill of the Hawks.'

Surely it was reasonable to ask that the prospective husband of Jane Baillie Welsh should earn a settled livelihood by exercising some profession suitable to a gentleman? Jane's cheeks grew hot. Ah, there was the rub! Thomas Carlyle was *not* a gentleman according to Haddington standards.

The position must be faced. Very softly Jane turned the key in the door and settled herself on the floor near the fire. . . .

Thomas Carlyle was *not* a gentleman . . . in marriage neither the man nor the woman should feel a sense of sacrifice . . .

Jane's dark eyes filled with tears. She believed herself capable of a great love, a love that would overleap public opinion and carry her off her feet; but it seemed that the hero who could so inspire her was only to be found in the realm of imagination. Her love for Thomas Carlyle, if she loved him, was a sentiment, deep, calm and analytical—not passionate.

Had he any certainty of being able to maintain her in the manner to which she had been accustomed? *No!* Had he any fixed place in society? *No!*—merely projects for obtaining both—and capability, but so far nothing attained. Surely she would be failing in her duty to herself if she married into a sphere lower than that into which it had pleased God to call her?

'Mr. Carlyle *must* get a settled income. He *must* apply his talents to gild over the inequality of our births! Then only can we talk of marriage,' decided Jane, but even as she took up her pen anxiety assailed her. Would Thomas

Carlyle slip away as had done George Rennie, now coming into recognition as a sculptor, and that established lion Edward Irving? Yet she could not marry eighteen-year-old Dugald despite his reiterated proposals; Dr. Fyffe was scarcely more suitable and the fame for which she hungered seemed a phantom floating in the distance down a path so long and difficult that only unremitting drudgery could force the way.

Jane's letter reached Carlyle as he was finishing his augmented *Schiller*, and he told himself that she was wise; only in rare moments of optimism had he hoped for any other response. His love for her was intertwined with his fortunes; hers for him was under admirable control. She asked for a life of joy and excitement; his desire was peace. She quivered under criticism; he had trained himself to overlook contempt. Marriage for them would entail even more than the ordinary amount of sacrifice; without the will to this their union must remain a golden dream.

Meanwhile there was *Schiller*, an honest book of 350 pages, not one destined for long life, perhaps, but a work that satisfied his conscience. Carlyle re-read stray paragraphs—

‘Literature was his creed, the Dictator of his conscience; he is an apostle of the sublime and beautiful and this, his calling, has made a hero of him. . . . Next to the task of performing glorious actions . . . is the task of conceiving and representing such in their loftiest perfection . . . To this Schiller was devoted; this he followed with unstaying speed all the days of his life. Pain could not turn him from his purpose nor shake his equanimity. On the whole we may presume him happy . . . His thoughts were of sages and heroes . . . He was long sickly, but did he not even then conceive and body forth *Max Piccolomini*

and *Thekla* and the *Maid of Orleans* and the scenes of *William Tell*?

. . . These kingdoms which Schiller conquered were as kingdoms conquered from the barren regions of Darkness to increase the happiness and dignity and power of all men. . . . New forms of truth, and images and scenes of beauty won from the void and formless infinite . . . a possession for ever to all the generations of the earth.'

The book should appear anonymously, for Fame, as conferred by reviewers, would be no honour. What was a reviewer but a vain pretender who lived on the breath of others? To the honest workman who understood the worth or worthlessness of his own performance he told nothing that was not better understood already, and not one *doit*, so Carlyle told himself, *not one doit* did he care what the purblind cockney critics said of it. It might be torn to threads or left to rot on the booksellers' shelves for ever, but he had done his part and nothing could take from him a treasure which had been delivered at the Pentonville lodging a few nights before by a supremely elegant lackey.

Carlyle had opened the little blue packet in bewilderment to find two pamphlets with ornamental covers, and, treasure of treasures, a letter from Goethe written in a patriarchal style which was much to his liking. Carlyle could scarcely believe that the signature was that of the mysterious personage whose name had floated before his mind like a spell.

He looked at his treasure once again and laid it away, then glanced round the unkempt room, rejoicing that his tenancy was at an end. Now he must to Birmingham and Dr. Badams, then Edinburgh for a few weeks, while Alick found a suitable farm; if not Craigenputtock, then another. Then Haddington—and Jane. For whatever the damsel might

say, and the God of Wisdom whisper, Carlyle had no intention of permitting a complete severance of relationship, particularly at a moment when literary affairs were prospering. Tait was considering the publication of various volumes of German romance, and an offer of a hundred pounds for the first edition of a life of Voltaire had reached him from Taylor and Henessy. They were drivelling men and Carlyle loved them not, but negotiations were continuing.

Thomas Carlyle's demand for a farm had reached Mainhill at a fortunate moment. Alick had been contemplating striking out for himself and had marked a small place a few miles from Ecclefechan, so now he promptly closed with an offer that had been made to him ; when Thomas arrived, fleeing from Edinburgh as from a pest house and bringing forty tomes of German fiction in his luggage, he found carts loading for Hoddam Hill, and his mother with her two youngest daughters ready to accompany him to his new home.

The little cottage farm delighted Carlyle. Small and poor the buildings might be, but it was his, with Alick for right-hand man. There was space, a superb view and good roads along which he might gallop.

Even amid the exasperating confusion of the move, when the women-folk could talk of nothing except green and yellow wash, Carlyle began to feel young once again. He filled his lungs with the air of his native Solway while his eyes surveyed the magnificent panorama from Hartfell to Helvellyn, from Criffel to the Craggs of Christenberry. Here, surely, the foul fiend which had troubled him for seven years would be laid to rest ? Heaven pity those who were sweltering among the fiery pavements of London,

begirt with smoke and putrefaction and all the tumults and distractions of that huge treadmill !

Two copies of the *Schiller* went to Haddington, one for Mrs. Welsh and another, specially bound in dark-green morocco, for Jane, who hung over the German inscription in delight, translating it haltingly—‘To the Maiden who animates me and is the Hope of my Life.’ How should such a sentence be tuned to satisfy a mother’s ear ? How, oh how, would she meet Thomas Carlyle, author ? She wished all doubts and uncertainties were over, and she prayed that her Highland pupil might be persuaded to depart before Mr. Carlyle arrived. The girl stuck like a burr and no coldness nor bad temper affected her serenity.

Carlyle came, and Jane found him vastly improved. Once she had ventured to present him with a hat, so disreputable to her mind was his head-gear ; now he appeared almost as dandified as Dr. Fyffe at his best—and he brought first-hand news of the great world ! He had crossed the sea and spent five whole days in Paris ; he had shopped in the Palais Royal ; he had met Edward Irving’s ‘noble lady,’ and Allan Cunningham—who had seen Burns reading ‘Tam o’ Shanter’ to his father—and Miss Johanna Baillie, who wrote plays and made puddings with the same facility.

Useless for Carlyle to insist that the literary world was disappointing and he had met few people of intellect ; Jane would not be convinced.

‘If, like me, you had lived all your life in a small provincial town, you would know better how to appreciate good company,’ she told him, and plied her questions. What was Mrs. Strachey like ? How old ? Jane longed

for a friend of her own generation, all her acquaintances in Haddington were cold, vain or selfish. 'And tell me of Mrs. Montague?' she urged. How often had he seen her?

'About once a week,' answered Carlyle. 'She likes to gather all the lions around her and make them roar. To induce this she showers out flattery—to Irving by the hog's-head—to me, carefully by the dram-glass, having almost turned my stomach with excess doses at first.'

Jane thought the phraseology scarcely delicate and asked hastily for news of Coleridge.

'He is sunk inextricably in the depths of putrescent indolence,' Carlyle assured her.

'And—and Edward Irving?'

Carlyle shrugged. 'He loves one, but when one leaves him the void in his heart fills speedily.'

'I shall love him in my memory,' answered Jane, 'but I have ceased to admire or trust him.'

'My heart's darling!' cried Thomas Carlyle, vibrating to the pain in her voice, and a torrent of words swept over Jane. 'Love me—help me! Rejoice with me in success—comfort me in failure.' Much as he loved her he felt that she deserved more than he could give her, but if they abjured vanity the way would be easy. Let them be candid at all costs; truth, even if bitter, was a grand specific of the soul.

'Consider me. All that I have and am are yours to take or reject according to your will,' said Carlyle hoarsely. 'Love me with your whole heart, and if Fame comes to us it shall be welcome; if not, we shall have something far more precious than it can either give or take away.'

'But—' Jane interrupted, 'but, Mr. Carlyle——'

'I will love you, whatever betide, till the last moment of

my existence. Choose the path that promises to lead you to true happiness and count on me to aid you,' he went on, passion in his voice. 'Dread nothing, Jane. Neither of us are selfish, each wants the other's good. Let us love one another to the end !'

'Love me and be good to me always,' said Jane in sudden capitulation.

'If your happiness be shipwrecked by my means, then woe is to me without end,' said Carlyle, drawing her into his arms. 'But it shall not be ! You will be blessed yourself in making me more blessed than any man has the right to expect upon earth. Jane ! God bless you, my darling.'

When Thomas Carlyle left, Jane, who hated engagements, found herself 'half-engaged.' More bewildering still, she had promised to go to Hoddam Hill.

Riding back, Carlyle thought of all the tender things he had omitted to say, and was miserable over the frustration of his farewell kiss by reason of Caroline's sudden entry. He caressed a pair of gloves found in his pocket, and vowed that Jane should not have them until she came to Hoddam Hill, where her stay must be prolonged until she learnt what small means were necessary to happiness. Would she be astonished at a way of life so different from her own ? In any case, she could not fail to love his family.

He prayed for fine weather, since there would be much to show her—Kirkconnell Churchyard, Fair Helen's Grave and grim Repentance Tower standing sentinel above the little farmhouse ; they would wander together through the woods, down lanes and across moors, finding peace and happiness as they talked.

'I ken how ut'll be,' said Mrs. Carlyle when her son told her of Jane's projected visit. 'She'll just feel as I

would do if I were gaun to live wi' Peter Paddy's folk, but if she wants *thee*, Tam, she'll no care !'

In the joy of his heart Thomas Carlyle wrote to Mrs. Basil Montague telling of his love. 'Would she write to Jane?' he asked.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### REPENTANCE TOWER.

There were moments when Jane looked forward to the Hoddam Hill visit with some trepidation, for 'half-engaged' to Thomas Carlyle though she might be, her mother had forced her to admit that she possessed little personal knowledge of him; she could almost have numbered their meetings on the fingers of her hand.

'You will be glad to return home,' prophesied Mrs. Welsh as Jane stirred jam with unusual meekness, trying not to listen when her mother told for the hundredth time how Mrs. Rennie's niece, Margaret, had lighted on a husband as rich as Croesus just by travelling a dozen miles in the same coach. Twenty-four hours later he had laid his heart and fortune at Margaret's feet, and now Mrs. Rennie was purchasing the finest pocket handkerchiefs imaginable as a wedding gift.

Why was fortune so niggardly towards Thomas Carlyle and herself when she was often lavish to fools, Jane wondered despairingly. It would be madness to set up house-keeping on less than two hundred a year, yet even this amount could scarcely be earned by one who seemed determined to devote at least a year to hoeing cabbages near a place called Repentance Tower.

Low in spirit Jane accompanied her mother to a card-



party, and caught so severe a chill that tears fell from good little Dr. Fyffe's eyes when he felt her feeble pulse, and frightened Mrs. Welsh promised her difficult daughter all the freedom she could wish. Her correspondence should no longer be subjected to maternal surveillance ; she might even go to Hoddam Hill without further argument so soon as she regained her strength.

But, while the girl lay, dosed with drugs and incredibly languid, a letter arrived from Mrs. Montague. Jane read and read again, first puzzled, then alarmed. What could the 'noble lady' mean by hinting that her, Jane's, heart was in Annandale—not London? Had she written to Thomas Carlyle to the same effect?

' . . . Confess all . . . be flawless . . . Do not stop half-way in nobleness and sincerity . . . The past as well as the present must be laid open . . . till your fears are cast out your love is still imperfect and your cure incomplete. . . . Believe me, my love, I owe many peaceful days and nights to a similar disclosure poured into the ear of a passionate, jealous-tempered man. . . . Mr. Irving is here again.' . . .

A wave of mingled fear and shame swept the girl as her eyes flitted over the pages. In one particular, at least, Mrs. Montague was correct. She, Jane Welsh, who prided herself upon her candour, had not been candid. She had spared no effort to make Thomas Carlyle believe that she had never cared for Edward Irving other than as a friend ; she had hidden the truth even from herself.

'I have been false,' she told herself vehemently as she stared into the grey light of dawn. 'I did love him. I loved him passionately. I loved him knowing that he was engaged to Isabelle Martin.' Burying her face in the pillows Jane wept, unable to force herself to further confession.

Who had betrayed her? What did Mrs. Montague know? Above all, *what had she told Thomas Carlyle?* Was his faith broken? Could he now be despising the girl whose truth and frankness he had so often praised? 'Woe, woe to me if his reason be my judge!'

Lighting her candle, Jane snatched at paper and pencil. Her doubts fled. She wanted to go to Hoddam Hill; she wanted assurance of love! Might she come? Would Mr. Carlyle still welcome her?

Morning after morning the girl looked for an answer in vain; neither her mother's care nor Dr. Fyffe's potions took effect—she seemed to grow thinner and more hollow-eyed every night.

Jane's pride was in the dust. She wrote again, clinging to the hope that if Thomas Carlyle held her in his arms once again he would forget everything but her love for him—and she did love him, of that she was sure at last. Even if he told her that he never wished to see her again she felt that she would still love, still venerate him, 'in life, in death, through all eternity!'

By some extraordinary mischance Jane's first letter had miscarried and took nine days to reach Thomas Carlyle. Perhaps, had he not heard from Mrs. Montague also, he might have failed to grasp the purport of Jane's impulsive, self-accusatory 'confession,' but that lady was explicit, alike in her statement that Jane's heart was still in England, and her belief that, had she married Irving, they would both have been miserable.

Dismayed by the thought of Jane's suffering and anxiety, Thomas Carlyle wrote in haste. 'Come, *meine Liebe*, come! Our hearts are one with a love grounded on truth. Come, and let me show you what manner of man I am and all that is within me, which as yet I scarcely know

myself.' Let her come by the first possible coach and he would meet her at Kelhead Kilns with horses; he could only wish that Hoddam Hill was a palace of fairies with rose-gardens, velvet lawns and stately chambers, instead of an insufficient farmhouse surrounded by oats and cattle, but he would not apologise for the rudeness of the accommodation that would be offered, or perhaps she would realise that he was merely a clodhopper.

'Hast got a letter yet, lad? When does she come?' The questions were of daily occurrence till Thomas Carlyle could answer satisfactorily.

The day of Jane's promised arrival dawned fair, and the mother, watching her son ride down the hill on the flame-coloured colt Larry leading a little chestnut mare Alick had bought recently, which Tom had been schooling to suit a lady's riding, thought she had never seen him look so handsome. He returned alone and neither Jean, Jenny nor Mrs. Carlyle dared voice their questions.

Grieving, that all their careful preparations had been made in vain, they watched him surreptitiously in the dim candle-light while he sat staring at his books, never turning a page. Something had happened—but what?

Late in the following afternoon a shock-headed boy arrived bringing a note from Jane. Somehow, she had been put on the wrong coach and was now stranded in a wayside cottage, where she had begged hospitality until a rescue could be effected.

In all haste Thomas Carlyle saddled the horses once more, and this time he brought Jane home, lifting her from the back of the little mare into his mother's arms.

Carlyle had promised his love a rustic welcome and bidden her bring 'a stock of needles, and chintz or drugget gowns,

lest her silks be spoilt,' but never before had Jane been treated more royally.

The turmoil of the harvest submerged the farm and the others were in the fields from dawn till dark ; but Jane was shown the beauty, not the burden, of toil.

Twenty — thirty — forty years later Thomas Carlyle could look back upon Jane's brief stay at Hoddam Hill as clearly as if it had been yesterday, telling himself that never before or since had he known a week so like a Sabbath.

Each golden September day seemed more beautiful and blessedly peaceful than its forerunner ; never before had the two been together and free—free to ride where they would, free to talk without interruption.

The gathering of the harvest, blue skies, fleeting white clouds and the magnificent panorama of sky and water visible from the farm, formed a fitting background for the girl, who, to the hard-working family, seemed a veritable princess in her aloof daintiness.

Jane smiled upon those who gave her welcome, seeing the members of Thomas Carlyle's family as mere flitting phantoms, in such bold relief did he stand out from among them.

Occasionally, he took her a-visiting. Once, to watch proudly while she played a game of chess at Hoddam Manse, and won ; once to Mainhill, where Jane offered her cheek to James Carlyle stained with field work.

' Na, na, mistress, I'm na fit to kiss the like of you,' he protested.

' Hoots, James, ye'll no refuse her when it's her pleasure,' protested Mrs. Carlyle, shocked by her husband's lack of gallantry, but James put Jane aside and disappeared. When he returned reclothed and newly shaven he approached his

guest unabashed. 'Now,' he said, holding out his arms, and Jane slipped into them.

But such days were rare. More often the two kept far from other company than their own ; together, he and she found Fair Helen's Grave, and Jane listened as much to Thomas Carlyle's voice with its Scottish burr and roll of the letter 'r,' as to the Romeo-and-Juliet-like tale he told of how Helen had flung herself between her duelling lovers and been wounded to the death by a glancing rapier, whereupon the unfortunate youth's antagonist had killed him and fled to Spain, returning after long years, still unwed, to die on Helen's grave.

They rode far afield or talked for hours, making confession of past errors and taking vows for the future, as they sat on the grey boulders near Repentance on the crest of the hill above the whitewashed farm, enduring symbol of the remorse of Lord Herries, champion of Mary Stuart. The grim sixteenth-century erection captured Jane's imagination, and she loved to trace out the word 'Repentance' carved between the emblematic dove and serpent above the door, and try to decipher the battered couplet—

'. . . tance, signal of my . . .  
Built of ye . . . stane.  
Ye lang shall tell my bluidy tale  
When I am deid and gane' . . .

Legend differed as to the noble lord's crime, Carlyle told her. One tale was that he had cut the throats of fourteen English captives when caught in a storm on the Solway, and heaved their bodies overboard to lighten the boat ; another, that he had sent fourteen of his kinsmen as hostages for his appearance in Dumfries on a certain day and had failed to put in an appearance, whereupon they had all been put to death.

Feeling her way into the old tower, half-frightened by the whirling wings of disturbed bats high above, or outside among the bracken in the long-disused graveyard surrounding Repentance, listening to the distant bell of Hoddam Kirk or watching the evening flight of rooks towards Ecclefechan, Jane was happy, and so sweetly submissive that Carlyle was enchanted. Her too critical spirit seemed chastened ; unconsciously, perhaps, the girl caught something of the admiring attitude of the family towards Thomas Carlyle.

Watching her in the pale gold of the late September afternoon, Carlyle found her infinitely alluring. Months before he had written some verses for Jane which a caustic sentence from her had made him withhold ; now some of the lines returned to his mind as vividly as if just composed :

*' The gay saloon was thine to tread,  
Its stately scenes adorning,  
Thine be, by nobler wishes led  
With bays to crown thy lofty head,  
All meaner homage scorning.*

*Bright maid, thy destiny I view,  
Unuttered thoughts come o'er me ;  
Enrolled among earth's chosen few,  
Lovely as morning, pure as dew,  
Thine image stands before me.*

*Oh that of Fame's far shining peak,  
With great and mighty numbered,  
Unfading laurel I could seek !  
This longing spirit then might speak  
The thought within that slumbered . . . '*

Bah, what was Fame if conferred by such individuals as some of those he had seen in London ? If Jane could only see the worshippers of it, with spirits eaten up by mean

selfish passions and their blood changed into gall as they stood hissing like so many rattlesnakes each over his own small plot—then she would understand that what mattered was the *man*.

Exactly how it happened Thomas Carlyle never knew, but now Jane's hand was in his and he was begging her to take him or refuse him, but not as he was *not*. Incoherently, yet in a torrent of words, he promised her that they would be rich in better things than silver and gold, for life lay around them like a huge quarry, in which, if only this accursed burden of disease could be cast away—and he was getting better every day—he would have strength to labour.

'And not alone!' said Jane, offering willing lips. 'I love you with all my soul.' Chastened and remorseful for the waste of years, she vowed to help. No longer would she allow herself to be tied by Lilliputian threads; she too would write with resolution.

But with Jane in his arms Carlyle refused to listen to her self-criticism.

'Gifts like yours are for something else than scribbling. It is for *being* that my heart honours you,' he told her. 'Oh, Jane! I do not need reviewing men, or rather mannikins, to tell me that you are gifted and lovely!'

If write she must, then he and she together would collaborate in a novel which should be in the form of letters. She should write as the spirit moved her; he, in his own way, neither fast nor well, but steadfastly, stubbornly—and when sufficient letters had accumulated they would sift the wheat from the chaff, sitting side by side, and fearlessly give the result to the world.

'I am happy,' said Jane inconsequently, suddenly aware that the halcyon days were ending.

'If you have been content on Repentance Hill with no

other society than that of honest-hearted toilers to whom rest is the highest form of recreation, you might even live at Craigenputtock for two months with an angel,' Carlyle mocked her heavily.

'Love me and be good to me always !' said Jane.

'God bless you, my heart's darling ! How in heaven's name *dare* you think of marrying me ?' answered Thomas Carlyle with humility as he drew her into the shelter of his arms.

'Love me dearly,' insisted Jane. 'Love me more than you loved Margaret Gordon, for with all my faults I do deserve it !'

'I love thee in the most secret recesses of my spirit,' he told her gravely. 'But, O Jane, remember ! There is no bird of Paradise—nothing that can live upon the scent of flowers without ever alighting on earth. The eagle itself must gather sticks to build its nest, and in its highest soarings keep an eye upon its creeping prey.'

She pushed back the heavy locks of hair that overhung Carlyle's brow, and he caught the little white hand and kissed it as he talked.

'We are poor miserable sons of Adam, formed of the dust of the earth, and our lot is cast on earth, but there is a spark of heavenly fire in every one of us, since it was the breath of God made us living souls, though too often the fire burns with a fitful twinkle,' he told her. 'It makes me sad to think how very small a part we are of what we might be ; how men struggle with the great trade winds of Life and are borne below the haven by squalls and currents which they know not of.'

The too brief holiday was over. Jane's tears fell as she mounted the little chestnut mare to ride to Dumfries.



‘*Espérons*, my dearest, *espérons*, *espérons* !’ said Thomas Carlyle, reining Larry back as Jane checked her horse for a moment to wave to Jenny and Jean high above them on the dyke near Repentance. ‘Who knows, but that within the twelvemonth we shall be married and you may be scolding me, quarrelling with me, and kissing me back to peace.’

‘No doubt all will come right in the process of time,’ answered Jane forlornly, ‘unless we both die in the interim !’ But Carlyle refused to be daunted. Now that Jane had shared the rugged peasant way of life, lived by himself and his family, and found happiness in their midst, he had no fears.

‘Love me, my dearest, and let the Devil and his world chatter as much as they like,’ he bade her with a foreboding of what was before the girl as they reached her grandmother’s doorstep. She offered him a mute kiss and he held her close for an instant.

‘God Almighty bless thee, Soul of my existence ! I shall think of thee every hour until we meet again.’

Entering, to find the house full of aunts and uncles leagued to ignore the visit to Hoddam Hill, Jane felt as if she had fallen from Heaven on to a patch of miry earth.

Jean, too shy to speak, had thrust a farewell ‘poem’ into the hand of the parting guest who had won her heart, and Jane wept as she read it :

‘*May Heaven guide thee, dearest friend.  
May Fortune sweetly smile on thee !  
And while I live, or think, or love,  
Thou shalt be still as dear to me !*’

The childish effusion found a place under Jane’s pillow with some verses Carlyle had written for her during sleepless hours on the previous night :

*' So fare thee well, but not forever,  
My best, my loved, my only Jane !  
What tho' in sadness now we sever ?  
Grieve not. We part to meet again.*

*Tho' storm and darkness lour above thee  
Burns thro' it still one glad bright ray ;  
Think that in life and death I love thee,  
While wandering far my desert way.*

*Now one fond kiss and then I leave thee,  
Not yet our strife with Fate is o'er !  
Weep not, let not our parting grieve thee.  
Ere long we meet to part no more !*

T. C.'

## CHAPTER XVII.

### ' VOILÀ TOUT ! '

The Indian summer vanished with Jane Welsh. Now wind and sleet swept the hill-top, and Thomas Carlyle wore wooden clogs on his morning walk to Kelhead Toll, or came back wet through after riding to post his letters in Ecclefechan.

Toiling laboriously at *German Romance*, he promised himself that the day would soon come when he should be free from hackwork for ever. Then he could turn to some undertaking of more pith, and the thoughts and feelings now deep and crude within his soul should find issue though the foul fiend himself should try to prevent it. For the moment he was happy with his family around him. Jenny sat on the floor stitching industriously at a sampler on which miniature robin redbreasts hopped about among initials which enabled Thomas Carlyle to guess the name of the

recipient. No one broke the sacred silence that surrounded the admired literary worker, but now when he smiled down at Jenny, Mrs. Carlyle put aside the copy of *Scots Worthies* she shared with Alick, to brush up the hearth. 'I didna ken how it is, but I think as much about *her* as of our John in Edinburgh,' she said reflectively. 'Tam, when you write, mind to send my kindest compliments.'

Carlyle's thoughts flew to Jane. How was she faring at her mother's hands? He might not be a good *parti*, he told himself with all humility, but it was no crime for Jane to love him even as he was; a peasant but an honest man and not an ill-natured one; not even, all things considered, an ill-tempered man. Neither was Jane's love the mere whim of an ignorant girl. He had laboured to show himself to her in all his crudity, and this love of hers was the calm, deliberate self-offering of a woman to the man whom her reason and heart had chosen. He felt her his in the sight of God.

With an effort Thomas Carlyle returned to his translation, Jane's face flitting between him and the dictionary. He must urge her to be reasonable, as well as meek, with her mother, for submission had its limits. 'When not based on conviction it degenerates into hypocrisy and encourages demands which ought to be resisted,' thought Carlyle, and then once again Goethe absorbed him:

.                    'The future hides in it  
                     Gladness and sorrow,  
                     We press still through,  
                     Naught that abides in it  
                     Daunting us. Onward' . . .

Jane was spending her days ransacking the shops in Dumfries buying gifts suitable for those on Hoddam Hill. There should be a neckerchief for Thomas Carlyle himself, and

stuff to make a gown for his mother—something bright, for Mrs. Carlyle looked her best in gay colours, whatever she might say. She should have a cap as well, but no milliner could produce what Jane thought suitable, so she resolved to make one herself during the winter, and turned her attention to the others. Alick would like a purse, and there must be a green bag for Jenny and a book for Jean, but what could she send Mr. Carlyle, ‘Mags’ and Mary?—Would the girls like handfrills?

She was happy in picturing the family’s pleasure when the carrier should deliver her box, and could imagine Jean wrapping away her book in soft paper and going round the neighbourhood trying to borrow a more ordinary copy that was not too good to handle.

‘Oh, what are they doing on Hoddam Hill!’ cried Jane.

When Mrs. Welsh arrived at Thornhill to fetch her perverse daughter back to Haddington, she found Jane ‘among wind, whist and ill-humour’ as the girl expressed it, and still stubbornly determined to love and admire Thomas Carlyle, though ‘the whole world’ derided her choice.

‘The man has bewitched and poisoned your mind,’ said Mrs. Welsh, who had hoped that life among the rustics on Hoddam Hill would have cleared Jane’s vision.

‘You are unjust!’ cried Jane, her quick temper flaring.

‘And you are lost to all sense of decency,’ retorted the mother.

‘I *will* marry him. In this resolve I am as steadfast as a rock.’

‘You have had other chances—you could have had more,’ persisted Mrs. Welsh in her last desperate attempt to save this daughter from disaster.

‘Men I have not loved—to sacrifice myself out of pity is a degree of generosity of which I am not capable,’ answered Jane, striving for dignity.

‘Pouf!—As for this Thomas Carlyle, he is irritable——’

‘When *well*, he is the best-tempered man alive!’ interrupted Jane wrathfully. ‘Oh, mother, it’s too late to argue—you gave your consent——’

‘Conditionally upon his making a name and a decent position so that he could give you a suitable home.’

‘Pooh! What is love worth if it cannot make rough places smooth?’

‘You are mad!’ Mrs. Welsh flung up her hands and changed the point of attack. Why must Jane persist in her strange epistolary friendship with Mrs. Montague?

‘I shall go on writing to her as long as I possess pen and ink,’ vowed Jane stormily. ‘She is a noble lady. No one shall prevent my admiring her as much as I please.’

‘You are rude—and ridiculous,’ retorted Mrs. Welsh angrily.

‘Heaven grant me patience,’ prayed Jane with the whimsical thought that had Job himself been subjected to such scenes he might well have cried ‘Damnation’; she would like to take the word as a motto for her seal.

Both women were thankful when a furious rapping at the front door interrupted the ugly scene. A moment later Captain Baillie entered in his Lancer’s uniform, looking more of an Adonis than ever. Why, oh why had not Jane captivated him, despite the relationship?—Such an air, such a voice!

‘Such a lot of little dogs surrounding him,’ thought Jane—Toby, Dash, Criagen, Fanny and Frisk, she welcomed them, if not the man, and they leapt about her while she asked herself how she could ever have admired this fine

gentleman cousin. He was a mere painted butterfly fluttering over the flowery surface of the earth, whereas Thomas Carlyle was a royal eagle.

Early in the New Year Carlyle moved to Edinburgh to superintend the printing of his book. Even though he had his brother Jack's company he found cheap lodgings, and the noise of the city, hard to endure after the love and silence that had surrounded him in Annandale. He slept badly; complained that the printers chased him like greyhounds; interviewed booksellers and professors who might help him secure further literary work, and, in his few leisure moments, hunted for a secluded cottage, vowing that he would get two of his sisters to come and keep house for him—unless Jane would—but no, he must not let her venture, for Jane knew nothing of that little word of three syllables which looked romantic but was so difficult to live with.

Miracles did occur, he told himself wretchedly, but for a woman accustomed to a superfluity of wealth to descend from her pedestal to live with a sick, ill-natured man in poverty, and not be wretched, would be the greatest miracle ever known.

He longed to see Jane and would have walked to Haddington for even a ten-minutes' glimpse of her, but she vetoed the project. In her mother's present mood a visit would be dangerous.

Not until Thomas Carlyle was back in his wilds did Mrs. Welsh show a change of spirit, then, finding Jane packing the caps she had made for Mrs. Carlyle, the mother offered a little handkerchief, saying that it might be sent to Jean. Jane's gratitude paved the way towards a reconciliation, and soon the two found themselves discussing a move from

Haddington, and Jane vowing that wherever she went she would never separate herself completely from her mother.

‘ Oh, why have you never said so much before ! ’ answered Mrs. Welsh, and in her mother’s arms Jane ventured to suggest Edinburgh as a possible place for settlement. Perhaps they might take a nice little house quite near the cottage to be inhabited by Thomas Carlyle ? We could walk and talk and work together, thought Jane in high delight. It would be Elysian to have him come strolling in to tea, night after night ! When she suggested the ideal plan, would he too feel that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand ?

Carlyle did not. He wished Jane in Edinburgh, but as his wife, and in a house that he could call his own so that he might slam the door in the face of intruders.

Could she not reconcile herself to marry, not the ideal Thomas Carlyle of her imagination, but the simple, prosaic man of reality ? Let her think clearly. Was it the poor, unknown, rejected man she loved, or the prospective rich, known and admired author ?

Such doubts hurt Jane’s feelings. How *could* anyone be so unkind when she had travelled thirty miles to order a gold ring with a heart on it holding her own hair ? If Thomas Carlyle lacked faith in her they had better take different roads ; he could marry little Kirkpatrick with her fifty thousand pounds, and she, any of the half-dozen eager suitors now clamouring for her hand.

Such a suggestion could not be passed over by a man of Carlyle’s stamp. Solemnly, he bade Jane look on the various pretenders with calm eyes, and if there be one among them whom she would prefer to marry *all things considered*, then let her accept that man and leave him, Thomas Car-

lyle, to face his destiny alone. Should she desire it, he would forswear her for ever.

Jane was miserable. She had not intended her impetuous words to be taken in so literal a spirit, and hated the offer to forswear her. Thankful that her correspondence was now treated as entirely personal, she shut herself into the sanctum and let her pen run wild.

How could she marry another man with Thomas Carlyle's image in her heart and his kisses still warm on her lips, she asked. Had he no respect for her that he had suggested such a thing? Oh, it would take many caresses to atone for such words!

' . . . Look cross at me, reproach me, even whip me if you will—your next kiss will make amends,' wrote Jane, carried away by the drama of the situation, 'but if you love me cease, I beseech you, to make me offers of freedom, for this is an outrage which I find it not easy to forgive.'

Dignity was rampant now, and Jane sought for suitable phrases. . . . 'If made with any idea that I should take you at your word they do a wrong to my love, my truth and my modesty, that is to my whole character as a woman; if not, they are a mocking better spared.'

Where would Thomas Carlyle read her letter? Would he fetch it himself, riding through the March wind to Ecclefechan, or would a sister bring it coming home from school? Perhaps he would carry it unread to Repentance Tower where they had kissed one another in the halcyon days of that 'Sabbath' September. . . . Jane dreamed on till the fire died down and her mother summoned her to the piano.

'She is an angel!' Thomas Carlyle told himself as he read the lines Jane had blotted with her tears. It was evi-



dent that the whole miserable misunderstanding had been occasioned by the eighty miles that divided them. Wedded they must be, then why not *soon* as *syne*?

Pausing pen in hand over the proof sheets of his fourth volume of *German Romance*, a way of escape from purgatory into heaven suddenly presented itself to Carlyle's mind.

Jane had been happy as his mother's guest. Would she not be happier if among the family as his wife?

Suppose the move now contemplated took place and the Carlyles, as a family, farmed Scotsbrig instead of Mainhill with the little adjunct on Repentance? He might have a near-by cottage of his own—would Jane marry him—and come?

And now every mail-coach that took the road carried letters between Haddington and Ecclefechan. Jane vowed that she saw Paradise in Carlyle's suggestion but felt herself barred as by a flaming sword. How could she desert a mother whose consent to the marriage had been won by a promise that separation should be nominal? Yet, by no stretch of imagination, could Mrs. Welsh be introduced into the day-to-day life of the Carlyle family. Surely it would be a better plan for Thomas Carlyle to live with his wife in *her* mother's house—if only he would yield that desire for a door of his own to slam!

The counter-project startled Carlyle, who was very clear that the man's part was that of ruler. At Hoddam he had been undisputed master, and his happiness and sense of dignity had increased from the day he had gone within his own four walls, where no one had presumed to grumble over his whims and habits. Had he asked for fire and brimstone his mother would have cooked it for him to the best of her ability. *Jane's mother* was of a different category. He could not imagine her humouring him, finding pleasure in

complying with his demands, reverencing him and loving him. No ! Jane must be made to see how infinitely better was his idea, and now he could tell her that Scotsbrig had been secured by his father and Alick—a monstrously ugly place perhaps, but tight and dry. It was to be floored and doored ; the upper story should be his, and the rest of the family could live below. He believed that Jane might find the ramshackle establishment beautiful if she became his wife.

The plan took shape in Carlyle’s mind as he wrote. Jane would have his mother and Jenny to love her also ; under their guidance she could learn the first elements of housewifery ; she could instruct Jean—the child was learning nothing at school, and must prove a more apt pupil than the lumpish Caroline who had taxed Jane’s patience. She should have books and pen and ink to keep her happy in bad weather, and on sunny days he and she would ride together.

Although most of his earnings had been invested in family ventures, Thomas Carlyle had saved two hundred pounds. Married, happy, safe from the meanest distresses of existence, he would write a book that should be no compilation, nor biography, but such a book as he had dreamed of. And after the day’s work there would be tea on the table and a circle of gay faces round it ; all would sit and talk, or he and Jane would read alone together while her dark ringlets twined themselves around his fingers . . . Paradise indeed !

But somehow the project hung fire. Possession of Scotsbrig was delayed, and meanwhile a new plan was advanced. Jane wrote in amazement to say that her mother had decided to sell the Haddington house and make her permanent home with her father at Templand, from which place she could pay frequent visits to her daughter at Scotsbrig.

Now all was well—marriage could be immediate—was Thomas Carlyle happy at the thought? But the vision of Mrs. Welsh at Scotsbrig forced a realisation of the unsuitability of the plan upon Carlyle's mind. By an effort his mother and Jane's might learn to tolerate each other, but more probably they would be moved to pity and dislike. *It would not do.* Even as far as Jane was concerned, the Carlyle family had been full of foreboding. The mother might insist that the matter must be left to the decision of the Almighty, but her daughters thought of Jane among them when they were busy with all-the-year-round mixed farming. They had been put to shifts to house her suitably at Hoddam Hill, for ten days, in perfect weather. Jane might well find a winter among them intolerable.

Much bewildered, Thomas Carlyle suggested borrowing the Haddington house for a few months, and Jane grew furious. Dr. Fyffe was the new tenant, she would *not* share his abode. Better far, take a small house in Edinburgh and let Mrs. Welsh furnish it for them.

An east wind was blowing and Carlyle had a bad cold. Although he bent the whole force of his intellect on the problem, he could not understand why Jane vetoed the Haddington project, but he was positive that he could not afford the upkeep of any Edinburgh house that Mrs. Welsh would think suitable for her daughter. Could not Jane imagine herself living there in splendour with a sick husband, the drudge of some gross, thick-sided bookseller, forced to hawk the laborious products of an aching head to find the rent?

'By God's blessing I will live in a dog-hutch on the produce of the brook and furrow before this shall even threaten me,' he vowed. 'Oh, Jane, Jane! Why will you oblige me to repeat that I am *poor*?' He wanted to gallop

to Haddington, seize Jane and force her to agree to live with him in Greenland if he willed it; but long-delayed books had arrived at last and he must work.

Jane was ill too, suffering from an almost continuous headache. 'What do you want?' she wailed. 'Are we to be married or not? If so, where are we to live?—anywhere but Haddington! I will love the country because there I shall have you more completely to myself,' she told him, 'unless solitude would weary you? As for poverty, *you must never speak of it again* or I shall feel it a reproach.'

But Thomas Carlyle clung doggedly to the main issue. Even while battling with *German Romance*, suffering from a sore throat and with plasterers and joiners working around him, he considered the question of finance. Men supported wives in peace and dignity, or contention and disgrace, according to their mutual wisdom and on varying incomes. Looking about him, Carlyle decided that one of the happiest families he knew was that of Wightman the hedger, who earned fifteen-pence a day with his mattock and bill. His cottage looked neat and comfortable, the chest was always full of meal, and the child, a bonny black-eyed boy, seemed exceptionally healthy.

It should be possible to convince Jane of anything, once he had her in his arms. He did not want Mrs. Welsh's help; by the cunning of his right hand he was capable of earning sufficient for himself and those that liked to depend upon him. He could ride his own serviceable charger along his majesty's highway owing no man anything, hating no one, fearing no one, and not so stinted that he could not spare a morsel to his needier fellow-men. What more should Jane ask? And yet there were a thousand things in life she did not understand! She would have to learn

to understand them all, both bitter and sweet ; the bitter he could not ward from her, the sweet he would teach her, God willing . . . As for Edinburgh upon which she seemed to have set her heart, he too would prefer it if only he knew how to get a footing there !

‘ What tig-tagging,’ said Mrs. Carlyle as her son tried to put some of his confused thoughts into words, ‘ an’ a’ comes to ae sheal-door at last.’

Somehow the miracle was accomplished, and in Comely<sup>1</sup> Bank, not far from Princes Street, a little house was found at a modest rental of thirty-two pounds per annum. It was pretty and convenient, though neither as commodious or as elegant as the one Jane was leaving, according to Mrs. Welsh, but Jane saw the flower garden in front, a spreading tree and an outlook on to green fields. She would have a drawing-room, three bedrooms, a kitchen and more cupboards than she could use unless Thomas Carlyle developed into a Bluebeard. Eagerly, she flung herself into the business of moving her mother to Templand and furnishing the Edinburgh house, till she found herself wondering why among all the evils mentioned in the Litany ‘ flitting’ had not been included. Surely there could be no worse thing in the world :

It was strange to think that marriage was in sight at last ; stranger still to realise that she had not seen Thomas Carlyle for a year. Matrimony was like death, Jane decided ; so long as its approach was uncertain it was a thing to be contemplated calmly, but confronted it took on new aspects.

‘ Ink words are ineloquent and paper kisses scarcely worth the keeping,’ she told herself inconsequently, then her cheeks

<sup>1</sup> Originally Comley.

flamed as she remembered two caresses that could never be forgotten.

Thomas Carlyle also, as he confessed to Jack, was looking forward to the affair with mingled feelings, among which was a sense of strong satisfaction that the glimmer on the hearth, however faint, would be his own. Knowing himself to be perverse, he felt that it would break his heart if he made Jane unhappy. He tried to picture their dual life—Jane going faithfully through her housewifely tasks ; himself writing his allotted pages ; then meeting over a frugal meal ; she the dainty lady-wife of a sick, sulky but not false-hearted or fundamentally unkind Goodman.

From the table where he sat Carlyle watched a pair of swallows that had taken up house in the corner of his window, where, despite droughts and bad crops, they seemed to be bringing up a family in high contentment. Surely he and Jane were as wise as these birds ! Then why, it God's name, could they not live as happily as the swallows ?

'The deuce is in people nowadays,' he thought. 'They may have food, raiment, wives, children, brothers and parents, yet still they ask for "happiness," meaning "pleasure"—a series of passive enjoyments . . . The ninnies !'

'Ready, Tom ?' asked Alick, putting his head in at the door, 'I'm awa' for Dumfries,' and Carlyle handed over the article on Jean Paul Frederick Richter upon which he had been working for the past month. He felt that it should have been better, since his subject was a genius, but how could a man write when all his thoughts were with Jane Welsh, his bride elect ? Strange to think that some could enter lightly into wedlock ; to his mind it were better to die a thousand deaths than to wed one whose integrity of soul could be doubted. She to whom one's heart was given must be worthy.

Carlyle moved restlessly. If only the nerve-racking ceremony were over ! His heavy eyebrows twitched at the thought of being married by a flesh-and-blood clergyman of the Church of Scotland, of joining hands before witnesses and dashing away in a post-chaise with Jane.

Why should it be necessary to pass through purgatory on the way to Heaven ? He wished he could fall asleep and awake to discover that the ordeal had taken place three months before, and he was now sitting writing another book in the little parlour at Comely Bank. Jane would enter to get some china from one of the presses—he could imagine how he would catch her around her slender waist and steal two kisses as she stood helpless, with her hands full of dishes for the dinner-table. How was Jane feeling ? Was she frightened, sad, joyful, hopeful—or repentant ?

‘Oh my dearest !’ he cried to her across the miles. ‘Hitherto our love has been a sound—a voice—it is now to become an action. We shall have many difficulties to encounter and much to enjoy together. Let us not be foolish but wise—and all will be well !’

The swift weeks passed, and a thousand mundane cares submerged Thomas Carlyle, till he found himself out of faith, hope and charity, and could only pray that he might be in better health and spirits before the marriage day, or the ceremony would certainly be a very original affair.

Did Jane know if it were necessary to be proclaimed in his own parish, and what was the etiquette of wedding gloves ? He galloped over the countryside, now getting the necessary certificate of celibacy, and now into Dumfries to set ‘certain fractions of men a-cutting clothes.’

Mrs. Welsh was in Edinburgh for the same purpose, while Jane fumed at home, unable to decide whether her

wedding should be on the Tuesday or the Thursday. She preferred the former, but the carriers had to be considered—unless Thomas Carlyle could send on his belongings beforehand, or let them follow?

Packing, sorting and rummaging continued at both ends. Congratulatory letters had to be answered, Carlyle collected what money he could, and set new literary ventures in train; he had no wish to spoil his honeymoon bartering with booksellers.

What did Jane advise as to the wedding journey? They must start early, having some seventy good Scottish miles to cover. He and John were planning to come to Thornhill the night before and put up at the Glendinning Inn; with Jane's approval, John would ride with them on the first stage, then come back with the chaise and return home on Larry. Or, in view of the uncertainty of being able to secure chaises and post-horses all the way to Edinburgh, would it be wiser to take seats in the ordinary coach?

Jane was horrified at both suggestions. She could not undergo the unheard-of horror of being thrown into the company of strangers, or, worse still, acquaintances, under such severe circumstances. Rather, a thousand times, would she risk being stranded on the way for lack of horses. As for John, while no unkindness was intended, and she liked him as well as he could possibly like her, he must *not come an inch* along the road!

She hoped to Heaven that Mr. Carlyle would get into a more benign humour before Tuesday or the wedding would not only bear ‘a very original aspect,’ but likewise a heart-breaking one. For herself, she meant to go through the odious affair as tranquilly as possible, although she felt faint at the very thought of it and knew she would be unfit for any eye but Thomas Carlyle's own for at least



a week afterwards. Were all at Scotsbrig praying for her ?

Carlyle was disturbed. He felt that both he and Jane were taking the impending ordeal too much to heart, yet when he tried to soothe his nerves by reading Kant, the philosopher seemed unusually abstruse, and Scott's latest novel, too, failed to hold his attention. By night, session-clerks, tailors and post-keepers haunted his dreams ; by day he wrote to Jane, bidding her take courage. She must refrain from feeling that the blessed ordinance, which, sanctioned by earthly laws that already sanctioned by Heaven, was 'an odious ceremony.'

'Be composed in spirit and fear no evil in this really blessed matter,' he wrote urgently. As for the journey, her will should be his law and they would roll along side by side, with all the speed of post-horses, till they arrived at Comely Bank—'then the door we open will be no longer "thine" or "mine," but "ours."' . . . The only stipulation Carlyle made was that he should be allowed to smoke three cigars on the way without criticism or sign of reluctance on Jane's part.

Everyone at Templand was being very good to Jane. It was even suggested that the two Carlyles should stay there, rather than at Glendinning's Inn, but they, and Jane, were equally determined in refusal.

On the Sunday her grandfather opened *Wilhelm Meister* and decided that it was a 'good book, being all about David and Goliath.' On Monday night he patted her on the head, as she was supping her porridge, and told her she was a 'douce, peaceable body'; this, though Jane had had a passage at arms with her aunt when that lady inadvertently betrayed her belief that Thomas Carlyle was not only poor, but, of 'lowly birth.'

‘He is among the cleverest men of his day,’ Jane had cried, ‘and not only the cleverest but the most enlightened. He is a scholar, a poet, a philosopher and a wise and good man who holds his patent of nobility from God Almighty, and whose stature of manhood is not to be measured by the inch-rule of Lilliputians.’

‘But as a husband——’ began Mrs. George Welsh mildly.

‘Mr. Thomas Carlyle possesses all the attributes I deem essential in the man who is to be *my* husband,’ interrupted Jane—‘a warm true heart to love me, a towering intellect to command me, and a spirit of fire to be the guiding star of my life.’

There was no more to be said, even by one hurt at not having been invited to the ceremony because Jane held that such happenings as marriage were the private affair of those most concerned.

Everything was done, even to the arranging of her financial affairs, so that no one could accuse Carlyle of ‘loving an heiress,’ and, resolute in spirit, encouraged by her verbal triumph over her aunt, and almost joyful, the girl sat down to write ‘the last speech and marrying words of that unfortunate young woman Jane Baillie Welsh.’

In her soul Jane knew that Thomas Carlyle loved her and nothing else mattered, but when he spoke of leaving her to smoke tobacco, or spoke of her as ‘a new circumstance’ in his life, her heart was troubled. ‘Be good to me always and I shall make the best and happiest of wives.’ . . .

Thomas Carlyle was also writing :

‘Dear little Child, how is it that I have deserved thee ? . . . I swear I will love thee with my whole heart and think my life well spent if it can make thine happy . . . Let us pray that our holy purpose be not frustrated ; let

us trust in God and in each other and fear no evil that can befall us . . . Oh, my darling, be *wise*—I mean clear-sighted towards me and the new sphere of life . . . be my Guardian Angel, my soul's friend, my own for ever and ever and I swear we shall be happy, for I love thee and long for thy good. Believe this, because it is true, and let it be an anchor of the soul as sure and steadfast as is thy love for me . . .

'My last blessing as a lover is with you . . . My first blessing as a husband, my first kiss to Jane Carlyle is at hand.' . . .

The marriage took place, early as decreed, and John Carlyle was the only stranger present. Then came breakfast and the drive to Edinburgh.

At nine o'clock at night Thomas Carlyle lifted his tired bride from the carriage, and Allison Greave, a maid engaged in Haddington, opened the door to her new mistress. Supper was ready in a firelit room.

'*Voilà tout !*' said Jane.

'For God's sake be good and wise,' said Thomas Carlyle, drawing her into his arms.

(*Concluded.*)

*The complete story of Thomas Carlyle and Jane Welsh, which 'Carlylean Courtship' forms the first chapters, is now published by John Murray under the title 'Speaking Dust.'*

## BALLADE OF SKYROS.

*O Heart of England, hidden deep  
 In flowers of Skyros' scented store,  
 While echoes through your dreamless sleep  
 The blue Ægean's muted roar,  
 A soft breeze from a northern shore  
 Bears fragrant tidings to your tomb  
 That even dust cannot ignore :  
 The English lilacs are in bloom.*

*At Grantchester the pansies keep  
 The tryst, with poppies' bright encore ;  
 Spring clambers up the chestnut steep  
 Above the river corridor ;  
 But spring nor yearning can restore  
 The spirit of that little room,  
 Though once again, beside the door,  
 The English lilacs are in bloom.*

*Here wandering hands of lovers heap  
 Rich garlands such as Sappho wore,  
 From Greece's violet-tinted sweep  
 The heady classic perfumes pour ;  
 Yet stirs the dust that England bore,  
 New-tortured in its narrow gloom  
 With haunted musings as before—  
 The English lilacs are in bloom.*

*L'Envoi*

*Heart that was England's to the core  
 Though death in exile was your doom,  
 Expatriate earth, once more, once more  
 The English lilacs are in bloom.*

JAMIE FRANCIS HESS.

*Los Angeles, California.*

## HIC JACET—

## I.

## THE DICTATOR.

*This is the tomb of one who was obeyed :  
 He climbed through wrecks from lowliness to power  
 And it was death to cross the plans he made—  
 Till Death crossed his, he glittered for an hour.*

## II.

## THE DEMAGOGUE.

*Here lies a man whose tongue's professing pride  
 With convolution's froth could oceans fill :  
 Loud cataracts of words on Earth he lied,  
 And still he lies, but now in earth is still.*

## III.

## RICH AND POOR.

*Here sleeps one who alone his wealth enjoyed,  
 Stretching no kindly hand to poverty :  
 Here sleep around him many he employed,  
 Poor people all, but none so poor as he.*

GORELL.

## BYRON AND HENRIETTA.

BY PETER QUENNELL.

THE consciousness of power is always demoralising. Great wealth—great beauty—great worldly position—each confers a power that may prove disastrous : but it is emotional power—power over the feelings of others—that promotes the subtlest disturbance in the possessor's soul. Don Juan is victim as well as adventurer. Cursed with the 'terrible gift of intimacy,' he moves from contact to contact, relationship to relationship, blasé yet insatiably inquisitive, disabused yet unable to resist the temptation of once again setting in movement the familiar processes, of working up to the old conclusion under a different guise. Passions differ only in the inessentials. But, since most rakes are sentimentalists at heart, there remains a belief that somewhere, at some time, a woman may be discovered who can reconcile the seeker to his past career and compensate him for the appalling sameness of his perpetual triumphs. Very often, he begins to distrust passion : for love or passion threaten to condemn him to the monotonous round.

Such was Byron's predicament in 1814. Other men have loved more indiscriminately ; but it was Byron's lot, to compress into a comparatively short period experiences that frequently occupy several decades and become a cynic philosopher before he had outgrown his youthful romanticism. Hence the odd contradictions of his private character ; hence the discrepancy between his public and private selves that has baffled a legion of admirers and critics ; hence his shifty and ambiguous attitude in questions of love. He

loved the idea of love and hated the reality. As a puritan, he had learned to despise women ; as an opportunist, he felt obliged to accept their homage ; but, as a sensitive if not particularly scrupulous being, he hesitated to arouse emotions that he could not appease. He hesitated, it is true ; but he generally weakened. There was ' a strange influence,' a curious charm, in women's society : perhaps a perverse satisfaction in ascertaining—not for the first time—that all women were, in some respects, so very much alike. Certainly, he derived a considerable moral stimulus from tempting the Providence that he had never quite ceased to respect and fear.

Yet, by the spring of 1814, his nerve was failing him. Once only, during the months of Olympian retirement with Lady Oxford, had he enjoyed the peace and quiet that his spirit needed ; and that quasi-domestic episode was now a memory. 1813, besides the mysterious and tragic summer happenings of which he ' scarcely liked to think,' had brought forth a hectic and difficult affair with Lady Frances Webster (who still wrote him passionate letters from Scotland) and a scene more than usually ridiculous staged for his benefit by the indefatigable Lady Caroline, who had cut herself with a broken glass, stabbed herself—ineffectively—with a pair of scissors and had been carried out of Lady Heathcote's ball-room (according to some gossips) ' actually in a strait waistcoat.' Then, the Princess of Parallelograms kept up her siege. That ' extraordinary girl' continued to write him long, long prosing and moralising letters, and to expect equally long replies by return of post. Really, his days and nights were seldom his own ; and it is all the more remarkable that, just at this period, when one imagines the unfortunate poet incessantly occupied, either answering a love-letter, warding off one of his many creditors, hobbling into his

carriage to attend a party or sitting out the furious importunities of the now thoroughly embittered and vindictive Lady Caroline (who invaded his privacy at all hours) he should have had time and patience for an unknown correspondent : that he should have made room for yet another admiring female in an existence that already resembled a battle-ground of mænads !

It must be admitted that the new admirer was extremely persistent. Henrietta d'Ussières was young, lonely, imaginative and (though innocent) entirely devoid of false shame or of the maidenly modesty with which young women then cloaked their artifice. Like many women, she decided to write to Byron. Unlike the majority, she was not deterred when he failed to reply and merely returned to the attack with redoubled vigour. She was determined to extort a kindly word. Among the large sheaf of letters from Henrietta to Lord Byron preserved among his archives at 50 Albemarle Street, it is not easy to pick out the trial-shot ; but evidently she began writing to him during the spring of 1814 and wrote repeatedly before she elicited a sign of interest. She pleads ; she wheedles ; she cajoles :

*' Ah ! Lord Byron (she expostulates on May 10th), you are—but no, my pen shall not write that wicked word. You are not unjust, you are good-natured . . . Some powerful motives, perhaps prudent motives, induce you to act as you do. You are not angry nor offended, I am almost sure of that. If you were, nothing would have been easier than to send me a cold and distant " Lord Byron is surprised, etc."*

*' Meanwhile, do you remember my threats ? They are never-failing threats—far worse than those of a Bellingham.<sup>1</sup> He killed*

<sup>1</sup> John Bellingham who had assassinated the Prime Minister, Spencer Perceval, in the lobby of the House of Commons on May 11, 1812. Byron attended his execution.



his man at once, & I'll tire you to death by degrees. I repeat again that you may avoid it, for as soon as I possess one line of your handwriting I'll cease to write, I do promise most solemnly though most unwillingly. To show you I am sincere I'll point out to you the shortest way of getting rid of my letters. The penny-post office is in Mount Street, opposite Charles Street. Send back there my last letter by a servant, charging him to tell the clerk that—you'll find some softening words for they shall be repeated to me.

'He might say you are gone in the country—that your letters are not to be sent to you—some thing of that sort . . . If you remain silent, then indeed I shall write again, & with a pleasure you cannot guess—at least while I am in London. Here I can carry the letters myself. No one in the world must see that direction in my hands, except the man at the office who, by the bye, smiled the last time I told him to take care of the letter tied with the blue ribband. His suspicions confounded me a good deal & I hurried away. Had I met you then you would have recognised me, & said, "This is the imprudent Henrietta" !'

Tormented by the recollection of that knowing smile, Henrietta hastens to explain that she is not what he may have supposed. Her feelings, she insists, are entirely platonic.

'Perhaps you think I like you rather too much. Is that it ? I hope not . . . Do not I wish to be your sister ? And then Thyrsa whom I love and regret. That is not all. One of the constant habits of my imagination (since I knew you) is of composing the picture of the one who is to succeed her. I do it with great minuteness, feature by feature—great ingenuity is not necessary . . . Could the picture I draw be realised, you would be pleased both with my taste and your future wife . . .'

So she proceeds through pages of copper-plate scrawl.

Up to this stage, Henrietta's effusions are hardly distinguishable from other effusions that Byron was receiving almost every day of his life, and must have inspired the same mingled feelings of annoyance and sympathy. Women were as exasperating as they were sometimes amusing. All had one object ; but every one of them, alas, made a show of approaching that object in a devious and effectually platonic manner, till she could trip up on the inevitable conclusion as though by chance. Had not Harriette Wilson even—the most notorious courtesan of the period—recently solicited his acquaintance, adding a postscript to the effect that what she wanted was not love but intellectual sympathy ! And where Harriette had failed, could Henrietta succeed ?

Byron continued to ignore her demands. Realising, however, that exasperation is never far from interest, and that downright repulsion is often closely allied to love, Henrietta persisted in her bombardment ; and her next move was to propose a completely new plan—that Byron should rid himself of her importunities by inserting a notice in the columns of a daily newspaper. ‘ From this day,’ she declares, ‘ I will look over every morning the page of *The Courier* (I am sorry, but in spite of my dislike it must be that paper). I may find there perchance a “ B—— forgives ”—which shall fill my heart with joy and gratitude. “ B—— forgives ”—nothing else . . .’ Having written, she was immediately horrified by her own presumption. She had done wrong. Lord Byron was, of course, offended. How could she make amends ? And, once more, she assures him that all she wishes—all she hopes for—is to read a single line of newsprint—to-morrow or, if to-morrow was too soon, Saturday or Monday. ‘ Conceive my joy ! I’ll be then no more a complete stranger to you. I’ll be something like a relation, an affectionate—what must I say ? an affectionate cousin.

The name is not particularly pleasant . . . I should have said another name had it not been presumptuous—

“ A sister whom he loved, but saw her not.”

Part of that would be applicable to me.’

Here it is possible that she touched a hidden spring. Always fascinated by the ties of blood-relationship—by the idea of some calm domestic intimacy, so much stronger, he believed, than any relationship founded on the mere fortuitous contacts of love and passion—Byron may have been interested and a little moved. But he was lazy and indecisive as Henrietta was vehement. Still she wrote ; and one after another her appeals vanished into the silence that surrounded those bachelor chambers in the Albany ; till importunity became desperation and folly grew frantic :

*‘ I have looked—I looked in vain ! So you would not ! You are displeased ! . . . Heavens ! what have I done, & why that anger ? I have been troublesome, but quite inoffensive. If anyone had written the same to me I should not be angry . . . You, who are so good-natured, how could you refuse this harmless request ? . . . A hundred painful conjectures succeed one another in my mind. Had you any particular reason for rejecting the thing I proposed ? My mentioning that compound of baseness and malice, The Courier, has put you out of humour, I fear. Consider, I had no other means of hearing what I wanted so much to know.’*

Having so far failed to extract the slightest response, either through the penny-post office in Mount Street or the agony columns of *The Courier*, Henrietta now suggested that Byron should write to her care of a firm of Swiss bankers in the City. One line, she protested, would keep her quiet : ‘ B—— forgives you ’ or, better still, ‘ I forgive you.’

Otherwise, she might execute her threat (already made in a letter, dated May 10th) of coming on foot to the Albany and besetting the doors till he entered his carriage. If only he would believe in her complete devotion ! There were pretty pictures of herself as a kind of seraphic, self-effacing attendant, stealing on tiptoe through his rooms, tremulously setting his precious papers to rights and perhaps pausing, finger to lips, while he mused and versified. How she envied the position of some humble maid-servant !

*' I would be so attentive to all your commands ! Neither careless nor too fussy. Just the sort of fire you would like—no cracking of doors—I should always come on tiptoe—your books and papers every day in the same place exactly. I almost fancy that I see you dreaming your angelic verses near the window. And if "the loved and lovely one," Thyrza, were living, oh ! I should do my utmost to please her.'*

## II.

Then, at last, Henrietta received her reward. That Byron, after long months of tiresome importunity, should finally have given way, taken up pen and ink and dashed off a kind, encouraging letter to a young woman of whom he knew nothing and whom he had every reason to suppose both sentimental and muddle-headed, is undoubtedly odd but less surprising than it might at first appear. He was a lazy man—hence, intermittently good-natured. He was a sensationalist and, though deeply experienced in all the disasters that may overtake those who allow themselves to be adored because to accept love is often easier than to reject it—in all the pains and penalties prepared by fate

*for people giving  
Pleasure or pain to one another living—*

he could seldom resist the charm of a new relationship. And Henrietta was a very decided personality. Foolish, no doubt ; yet, even at this distance in time, her letters have a certain charm, freshness and natural impetuosity that redeems them from mere sentimental commonplace. They have an air of youth ; and youth was a quality that Byron valued.

He replied—and replied, what was more, at length. This was on June 17th. Henrietta sat composing a further appeal, when into the room came a servant who handed her a letter, at which she glanced with an involuntary throb of interest—‘ (involuntary, for I had given up every hope). I opened—my hands trembled in the most dreadful manner—I fear it is not over yet.’ The envelope, with its unknown superscription, ‘ caused a breathless palpitation that made me pause. When unfolded—oh ! joy—heartfelt joy. Heartfelt joy. How good-natured you are ! No “ Lord Byron is surprised ”—no third person—“ *you* ” everywhere—your own stile of writing—familiar questions—complete forgiveness—and you are not in the least offended. I thank you a hundred times . . . ’ Overwhelmed with emotion, Henrietta hid the note she had just received, snatched up her last letter to Byron and darted out into the rainy summer streets.

*‘ It rained but I never felt it. I had a veil on to conceal the unnatural redness of my cheeks, in spite of which several men looked at me in the face. They took me, I suppose, for nothing good, seeing me in the streets dressed in white, by this bad weather . . . But now to the questions. You guessed right—your correspondent is a Swiss mountaineer. I have long been in exile. Whole years could not reconcile me to it, despair had taken hold of me, when I first read your books. You do not know the attachment one can bear to mountains . . . I told you I was a savage girl, & savages love their native land.’*

Her history, as she narrated it, was extremely romantic. Her father, a Liberal, ‘a lawyer of great activity’ and a fervent believer in the doctrines of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, had ‘played an active part in the Swiss revolution.’ He possessed ‘many fine qualities mixed with a thousand bad ones. Liberty was his idol, but he carried everything too far. His political conduct was always honourable and consistent—not so with his family which he ruled in the most despotic manner. Humane, kind, charitable with all others, his rigour was for us alone. You easily guess that we were not educated like other children.’ They ran, Henrietta explains,

*‘like wild wild squirrels from morning to night, continually exposed to the rain, to the burning sun, half naked & bare-footed. After the age of two years we were thrown every day—literally thrown from a great height, & what is more curious by Papa himself—into a pond 6 feet in depth, so that all could swim, boys and girls. That is not all. He hated the sight of servants—never one appeared before him. His children replaced them in everything menial. No instruction—plenty of books, and “read what you please”’ . . .*

Like many enthusiasts, M. d’Ussières was also an egotist. The children were permitted to run wild, climb trees, crack nuts with their teeth, sleep out among the haycocks in hay-making time ; but, though their father hated authority, he enforced his own. He expected the daughters to marry as it suited his book ; and Henrietta was suddenly confronted with an elderly, benevolent but uncommonly hideous gentleman to whom her parent demanded that she should become betrothed. He had the appearance of a

*‘superannuated rake. I saw once a caricature of the Duke of*

*Queensbury, which was very much like him . . . However, as he always brought me lozenges and drawings from Lausanne, I was pleased with his kindness till I knew I was engaged to him—they did it without my knowledge. I refused to comply—this is not exactly the truth, though. To refuse anything to my father was no easy matter, for, violent to frenzy when contradicted, he made use of powerful and irresistible arguments. I did not say no, but I fled, & I passed three days in a neighbouring wood, where my little sisters brought me food in secret. He found me there himself, one day when he was hunting with his favourite setting dog, whose jumping and joy betrayed me. I was taken home. Mamma then endeavoured to make me obey ; she said “ I was poor—I had nothing.” To all that I only replied, “ Why cannot I be a peasant girl ? ” This was treated as a childish romantick vision, though I had never read romances. I had my choice—to adhere or decamp. I chose the last, & I was put under the care of an English merchant’s daughter who was returning to England. Thus I was banished from home at the age of 15. . . .’*

In this narrative, as in her account of how, at an even earlier age, she had encountered Napoleon at a parade near Lausanne, Henrietta probably exercised her imagination. The meeting with Napoleon seems too good to be true. He had just returned from his Italian campaign ; and ‘ contrary to positive orders,’ Henrietta played truant and rushed to the parade-ground. There she very nearly met her death ; for she just missed being ‘ run over by some his aides-de-camp on horseback,’ among whom was ‘ young Eugène Beauharnais. By a violent motion of the arm Buonoparte stopped the first who would have killed me on the spot. In running away I fell on the ground. He took me up & talked to me—not with a savage and ferocious look, but with the

smiles, the soothing words of a true friend of the little race. But then he was not ambitious . . .’

Whether true or false, these stories were at least arresting. Henrietta was no ordinary young woman; while about her actual means of livelihood she remained curiously vague. Her age?—That, too, she preferred to conceal. Her appearance?—‘I am sorry to be obliged to tell you that I am dark, tall & awkward.’ She has lived in England, she explains, for many years. Clearly, her position was subordinate; but it was not undignified; and she amuses herself by describing to Byron how acquaintances of his, whom she has overheard, have discussed his character and his poetry in her presence. ‘What can H. be?’ she imagines him wondering. ‘Perhaps a lady’s maid—perhaps something still worse, an amphibious animal, as those seen in books, called *humble companions*. She may also have heard the above conversation at the play—at the opera?’

Obviously, she was longing to enlighten him; and, in letters written to Byron after his first response, one is not surprised to find a single recurrent theme. Where does he live, and can she visit him? *What* was the Albany? She had questioned the ‘man who brought back my Harp-lute’; but the messenger had merely looked bewildered and could tell her nothing ‘except “Ma’am, it’s a sort of place for old batchelors to live in.” By his look and manner I really thought he would say it was an hospital.’ Perhaps she might venture there herself.

‘*Could I really see you? Oh God, what a temptation! Before writing at all, I had . . . a thought of going, believing you had a house . . . not knowing what the Albany was. Suppose I should meet some of those gentlemen! And your own servants, what would they say? If I were known I would be utterly lost;*



*even those persuaded of my innocence would condemn me ; in short, nothing would remain to poor Henrietta but the Serpentine river.'*

But the following letter is less dubious. She has begun to pluck up courage ; and

*' the Serp<sup>ne</sup> river & all other gloomy images appear every moment more remote. I see but you—I think only of the pleasure of seeing you—of hearing your voice. Chance may be as well in my favour as against me. I have read the Court guide twice, & all the names of those who inhabit Albany are unknown to me. I shall do my best to get more information about your mysterious dwelling, & then I'll go.'*

Just when she went, we cannot determine. But it was some time during the month of June ; and Henrietta, meanwhile, had pursued her enquiries and had discovered that the Albany, instead of being 'an immense building in the middle of a yard, with only one entrance . . . the whole situated in some distant street, behind Piccadilly,' was quiet, discreet and easily accessible, conveniently placed almost 'opposite St. James's Church.' The temptation was too tremendous to be resisted. Visions of discovery—ruin—suicide paled into insignificance before the prospect of meeting Lord Byron face to face, of hearing his voice and perhaps touching his hand. After a number of anxious enquiries—should she come by day, which would remove any suspicion of impropriety : or during the evening, when candlelight would give her self-confidence ?—Henrietta laid her plans and took the plunge. Equipped, one imagines, with an exceptionally thick veil, lest she should encounter any of the dreaded 'old bachelors' in courtyard or passages, Henrietta presented herself at the poet's door, was admitted

and crossed the threshold of his private apartments. She admired the parrot, the bookcase, the sacred writing-desk, a crucifix that ornamented his sitting-room wall.

And Byron was kind : he was uncommonly kind. For the first half-hour, Henrietta existed in another world, eagerly talking, listening, asking questions : then she noticed a disconcerting change of attitude. Byron came down to earth with cynical suddenness. He made overtures—framed a proposition. Henrietta was genuinely dismayed. She escaped, fluttered home again and there sat down to compose an agitated reproving note, covering excitedly many sheets of miniature writing-paper. Her calligraphy betrays the distress of her feelings :

*‘ Why did you spoil my joy ? The first half hour I was so happy ! I did not conceal it because this joy was pure & harmless, & that I am sincere, but for the remainder of the evening it was no longer Lord Byron—indeed it was not . . .*

*‘ I shall ask you one question—This Henrietta that you saw yesterday—do you think she deserves the end that would be hers were she to follow your advice ? I made a sad mistake. I thought that when once you were acquainted with my history you would only pity me & be my most zealous protector. Instead of that !—oh ! Lord Byron, is it thus that you would repay so much admiration—so much esteem ? ’*

Did Byron trouble to compose an apology ? At any rate, he was forgiven ; and, having recovered from her surprise and her perturbation, Henrietta at once proposed a second meeting. But her second adventure was less romantic than the first. It would seem that she announced that she wished to visit him—put off her visit—finally changed her mind and decided to arrive impromptu. The occasion selected was most inopportune ; for the Allied sovereigns were that

night being fêted by the members of White's Club ; and Piccadilly was packed with plebeian sight-seers who had assembled to goggle at the Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia, Marshal Blücher and the whiskered Hetman of the Cossacks. It was no place for an unprotected girl ; and Mademoiselle d'Ussières with her odd mixture of timidity and hardihood, her vague manner, her awkwardness and her unusual height, was soon floundering, lost and tremulous, in the depths of the crowd :

*' My God ! (she writes) if I reflect on that moment when surrounded by thousands who stared at me—I did not know which way to turn—I shudder. Obligated to come back, but terrified at the idea of crossing again Piccadilly, I entered the first street by which I could get out of it . . . There I wandered, frantic with terror, crying—really crying. I did not know where to go, & people looked at me in such a manner ! Your English mob has always been rather too civil to me—not that I have anything remarkable, but they seem to have a particular regard for talness (sic). On Monday, it must be owned, I looked like a lost sheep. A man, half-gentleman, half-beggar, followed me—gave me two gentle knocks on the arm—said he would take care of me, etc. Was that terrifying ? '*

Luckily, just at this moment, a good-natured middle-aged couple, who had also noticed her agitation, took Henrietta in tow, piloting her to the back-entrance of the Albany where she imagined that all her troubles would have an end.

But no—she rang for admittance, and Byron's valet, Fletcher—he looked, Henrietta considered, ' such a good man '—appeared with the dreadful message that his Lordship was not at home. Or rather, his Lordship *was* at home but not available ; for he was receiving masculine company.

*' I asked him to let me wait, & then to call you out in such a*

*supplicating tone that indeed he could not refuse. I stole into a sort of Pantry . . . Had I been in a subterraneous, a ruined Chapel, a cave strewn with skulls and reptiles, sepulchral lamps, etc.—but a Pantry!! a Pantry flanked with mops and brooms! . . . I am joking now that my torture is over, but I never supposed the like in my life . . . You see now if I could go away as I came. Why did you say that word? And you smiled & you laughed when I was ready to cry!’*

At this point, while Henrietta cowered among buckets and brushes, listening to the hum of convivial masculine conversation that reached her from a distant room, till the good-hearted Fletcher produced his master, a Henry James might have preferred to round off the narrative. Byron would come to meet her in the pantry closet: there would be an embrace—a pat on the shoulder—a few careless kindly words—and Henrietta (escorted by Fletcher) would creep out into Piccadilly and thence return to an obscure and humdrum life. Yet a pantry—any pantry—the mere sight of pails, brooms, mops—would have the power, even when she was an old woman, of re-awakening her emotion and bringing back the memory of those exciting, desperate days when she had braved the terrors of the unknown Albany, had refused Lord Byron’s love and accepted his friendship . . . But Henrietta, alas, like Lady Caroline, like Lady Frances Webster, like Harriette Wilson, like so many other women who had tried to ensnare him, possessed very little feeling for dramatic unity. She continued to pester Byron with urgent suggestions. Would he meet her on the steps of the Grosvenor Chapel? But Byron did not keep the rendezvous. Would he write her a word—a single word? But Byron did not write. And their correspondence soon became exclusively one-sided, Henrietta now writing to

describe some new attack on the Albany citadel—the porter usually shook his head and said that there was no reply, now seeking to interest him by an account of a visit to Byron's dentist—'his Lordship' (declared the voluble Mr. Waite) 'is very good-looking indeed . . . He is pale & has such a head of dark curly hair all round—so (showing his own head with both his hands) as you never saw the like.' His teeth, added Mr. Waite, were small but very fine. His eyes—'very like yours, ma'am . . . Fine dark eyes sparkling with intelligence.'

Byron, alas, was easily bored and easily irritated. His little flash of interest had died down ; other women—more important and more attractive—now engrossed his attention ; and throughout Henrietta's second siege of the Albany he seems to have maintained an apathetic silence. The end came when she learned of his approaching marriage. Henrietta had long expected that Byron would marry and had endeavoured to extract a promise that, if he had a daughter, it should be called by her name and she should be allowed to regard it as somehow her protégée. But she had not expected that the blow would be so sudden—that it would plunge her into such appalling desolation—that she would feel all meaning and poetry had gone from her life :

*'I have been looking at this sheet of white paper sometime before I could begin to use it—it is the last of mine that shall ever reach you. The final letter I was quietly speaking of, a fortnight ago, I am this moment writing it under circumstances more painful, and sooner than I expected without being permitted to employ any of the kind words I fondly foretold. Pardon me for speaking to you in that way—dear Lord Byron, pardon me. If sorrow were ever sacred to you—I am miserable. "I may write to him" soothed, cheered, consoled—ended every grief. I may no more . . .*

Shall I be then again an utter stranger to you ? Do not say so. I would rather die. . . . If you were here (I wish you were ! at your feet I would remain till I had obtained a “ softly said, depart in peace ” . . .) but if you were, perhaps with reprobative looks of displeasure you would say : “ Henrietta, you surprise me . . . did you expect this extraordinary correspondence would last for ever ? ” Dear me ! I did not. Happy in the present and thoughtless, I foresaw nothing. Your going abroad before me was the only evil apprehended. I knew you would marry, I wished it for your good—don’t you remember that I told you so ? . . . I did not think it would happen yet. Why did you not acquaint me with your marriage sooner ? . . .

‘ All the objects on which I set my eyes cause fresh pain ; Medora’s song—my writing desk so much resembling yours—the little ink-stand that shall no more be wanted—a letter, the writing of which I looked at every night, and touched . . . not only with the hand—when duty had been well done. . . . I had given the world to see your room once again before leaving London, to correct a drawing of it from memory. As long as I live, I cannot behold that room again . . . neither your chair, nor the silver urns, nor the crucifix—the bookcase nor the Parrot’s corner—I envy the Parrot . . . Past recollections are not all lost in the sorrow of the present moment. I try to be calm—I repeat often the name of Miss Milbanke and of Lady Byron, to get accustomed to the sound—then, then am I indeed truly wretched.

‘ Now, Lord Byron, hear my prayer . . . From the month of May, to this day, it cannot be otherwise but that I have many times acted or spoken differently than what you should precisely have wished particularly of late—my foolish gifts and my long letters, how unwelcome ! The last were perhaps mistaken for those of another . . . and looked upon as troublesome intruders . . . It is your pardon I ask, for whatever unpleasant sensations I may have occasioned, by deeds, or words. . . . I see your eyes,

wondering over this—and your mouth—your chin—the last I recollect particularly well, though I don't know why—and your dark hair, your whole person, your face . . . is it grave ? does it frown ? . . . or does it wear a soft indulgent look ? . . .

‘ Now for the parting. Pity me, forgive if you cannot be parted with as an ordinary man. If Augusta would but love me—I cling for consolation to all those dear to you, but one—Do you think she would object to my resuming the same intercourse in 13 years time—we'll be then very old—upon any condition, restriction she should think proper to dictate—if it were to speak only of my little girl and of my mountains—Goodbye—goodbye forever. Farewell to the hand that shall open this letter, cherished and loved, though it broke my rosary, you remember ? That hand I kiss—I bless, imploring again forgiveness and remembrance without severity.

‘ Henrietta.’

Her farewell covers eight sides of gilt-edged notepaper ; and the last page is heavily spotted and blistered with tears.

## THE OTHER MAN.

### A TRUE STORY.

BY ROBERT M. MACDONALD.

PERHAPS all that followed was my own fault, for, while wandering in the heart of unknown New Guinea, one should not stray from his comrades needlessly, and I had been eager to have a closer look at some rocks we could just see from our camp. At any rate I was on my knees examining a stone with my magnifying lens when I became aware that a stalwart savage had stolen up noiselessly behind me and was in the act of bringing his upraised club down on my head. I was never famous as a quick thinker and I do not remember if I thought at all at that moment, but during the next I certainly did not, for the club had fallen and I was unconscious.

When a sense of my surroundings dawned on me again I was tied to a wooden god in the *Tapoo* House (sacred edifice or museum) of some New Guinean tribe, and I wondered what had happened to my comrades. Of course, we had not dreamt that we were near a native village. But there was no use in going over the past now; we should have to pay the penalty of making a mistake—if some of us had not already paid it. I suppose my thoughts wandered then and things before me became indistinct, but this time I could not have been entirely unconscious, for I could feel my head throbbing like a watch spring and I suddenly knew that two natives were standing over me.

‘He is *tapoo*!’ (a semi-sacred mortal) one said in a moun-



tain dialect I understood slightly, and here rather freely translate. 'Only a man who is *tapoo* may kill him.' Evidently I was the subject of the conversation and evidently also some signs cut on the palm of my right hand had been noticed.

'But the priests and most of the sorcerers are *tapoo*, and they can kill him in the manner they think best,' said the second man hopefully.

'No,' sighed the first speaker. 'According to the laws this man may only be killed in a man-to-man fight, and, as the men you have mentioned are not warriors, each of them is afraid that this man might kill him.' The man who was speaking seemed very despondent. Probably he was of high rank and had a sense of responsibility.

'But did not our warriors bring in another prisoner whom they caught in actual combat with this painted white man at our feet?' persisted the second man, still hopefully. 'That other man is not of our people and therefore our priests need not worry as to whether he is *tapoo* or not. If he and this white man here killed each other in open fight to-morrow it would give much pleasure to the people.'

'You have spoken well,' the doleful being said, and this time his tones were not so gloomy in nature. 'I shall tell the priests what you have said. Yet I am troubled. What was this white man with the painted skin doing in our land? The nearest gold-seekers' camp is far away over the ranges——' The words of the two speakers faded away and dimly I was aware that they had passed on.

But what they had said began to whirl round inside my head like the contents of a pot about to boil over, and from out the turmoil came the thought to my enfeebled brain that somehow my mates had not been caught. But I could

not understand what had been meant by the statement that the native who had attacked me while bending over some rocks was a prisoner too, and while my mind vainly struggled to unravel that problem my senses faded away into utter oblivion.

When I again realised that I was living I was also aware of the fact that a native was bending over me trying to feed me with a roasted concoction of grubs and beetle's larvæ. I knew this dish was deemed a luxury by most New Guinean tribes and was only given to those who, although held in respect, were about to be killed. The wild throbbing in my head had now ceased and I felt much better, but I was not hungry.

'Hims all li' now?' asked the man who was feeding me, in a kind of English, and on my explaining to him that I was as well as could be expected under the circumstances, and showing some surprise at his being able to talk English, he continued: 'Oh me speaky white fellow lingo all li'. Me been long time carrier boy wi' white fellows down in gold-fields camp.'

I complimented him on his mastery of the white man's tongue, and, anxious to know what had happened to my comrades, asked casually: 'Do white fellows ever come up this way?'

'No blame fear,' came the answer; 'they have too much savvy; they no' like head-hunting people. You am only blame fool white fellow wi' painted skin who ever come here——'

'Yes, I know I am all kinds of a fool all right,' I interrupted. 'Still, I look like a warrior of the hills, don't I? How come that you fellows catch me?'

'Oh, you easy to spot as being sham black fellow even if him's hair am all standy up straight an' him's skin am

black. Some of our warriors on way over to odel village see him an' odel black fellow fightin'. They tink it very funny an' catchy both an' bring back to this village. Here we know that him am white fellow, but signs cut on him's hands say hims *tapoo* an' must no' be killed except by man who is *tapoo*. That trouble big Chief of warriors, for he no' savvy what to do wi' white fellow, but all trouble away now. He find out that odel fellow no' belong our people, p'r'aps belong far-away people we no' know, an' priests make hims *tapoo* now so that hims an' hims can kill each wi' clubs at big feast to-morrow.'

Probably the English-speaking native jailer rambled on, but I don't think I paid much attention to what he said afterwards. He had already told me that the warrior who had clubbed me was as much out of bounds as I had been and given me to understand that no other strangers were suspected of being in the country. I realised that I had got to die on the morrow, but I think that my mind was still in such a state that it did not seem to me as if that were a matter of importance, still I do remember that when the friendly jailer left I was greatly concerned over the fact that I never had been equal to any of my comrades in the art of wielding native spiked clubs. I think the desire to get even with the other fellow was strong within me.

I felt remarkably well that night, and while the people of the village made preparations for the great fight of the morrow outside the *tapoo* house I sat and watched them through a matted aperture in the walls of my prison which had been opened to allow of ventilation. I also tried to talk with any natives who happened to come within speaking distance of the *tapoo* house, but, as none of them knew English of any kind and my knowledge of their language was limited to the few words common among all New

Guinean tribes, the attempted conversation was more misleading than anything else. Still, I had a good view of the preparatory proceedings, though, mercifully, I was not so interested in them as a coming principal in the play ought to have been, and, when at length the many floating-wick lamps in front of the *tapoo* house were extinguished and the various village noises ceased for the night, I went to sleep, happy in the one thought that filled my being—my comrades were not there.

Next morning I breakfasted well on some mysterious substance of which I did not enquire the nature and, after suffering a sort of address by the Chief Sorcerer which was entirely unintelligible to me, was adorned with a tall but light wooden head mask which fitted over my shoulders, but had holes for arms and the use of sight, and was fancifully outlined in red paint. I was then invited to take my choice from a number of ferociously-barbed spears, heavy spiked clubs and some shields, and as I hardly knew the use of the spears and shields I selected a club and was led forth to the place of combat. This was a stretch of ground fronting the river which flowed past the village and seemed to be more or less reserved for public festivities.

The sun shone down with scorching intensity, although it was still very early, and my mask felt like an oven. Only as if through a mist could I see that a large crowd of warriors, women and children, mostly garbed in red and white flowers, but little else, had assembled to witness the fight, but their yells of derision on seeing the painted white man sounded—and felt—like hammer-blows on my encased head. The Chief of the people and some of his leading warriors, and the priests and sorcerers (of whom there seemed to be a great many), stood near me inside the ring formed by the people, and when the first-mentioned saw that all was in readiness

for the great event to begin he struck a lizard-skin-covered drum as a signal and the other man, my opponent, similarly dressed in wooden head mask and armed as was myself, was led into the ring from somewhere and brought to a halt opposite me.

Like me he seemed to be dazed at first, but judging from his lower limbs (which were the only parts of him exposed) he was a stronger specimen of mankind than I was. He too was greeted with yells, but I had the impression that he mistook them for sounds of approval and I had the idea that he thought that if he killed me he should be allowed to go free. I knew differently, however, for he, being as much an outsider as I was, would be dealt with in some horrible manner even if he killed me. I think I was sorry for him. Strangely enough, perhaps, it never struck me that my own case was deserving of sympathy. I think now that it was, but I also am of opinion that in moments of crisis nature dulls one's senses. I have no idea of how long we stood facing each other, but when the Chief sounded a signal upon the drum again we both seemed to realise that we now had to do our parts and we stepped towards each other with clubs upraised; and the yells of the populace swelled into a rolling ocean of sound within my mask. I think I had some sort of impression that I was engaged in a spectacular performance in which there could be no danger, but I was brought rudely to a sense of reality when the other man's club crashed through my head mask, but otherwise did me no harm.

I think I was now angry, and, forgetful of the fact that the winner in a club fight is the man who saves his strength, I struck out viciously at the other man before his club was upraised to deal me a second blow. Evidently the other man did not know the art of dodging—if dodging tactics

are in the game of spiked club-fighting—and my blow came down slantingly on his mask in the region of where his neck should be and knocked him clean off his feet. I was surprised at the ease with which I had won the first round, but while the shouts of applause, or whatever the shouts meant, were still sounding in my dulled ears like the noises produced by rival steam orchestras at merry-go-rounds playing different airs I became conscious that the other man had regained his feet like an overturned cat and was aiming a terrific blow at me. Before my mind could function properly that blow fell and, crashing through my already weakened mask, spent the rest of its descending force on my left shoulder. Of course my collar-bone was broken and I fell to the ground and wriggled in intense agony. The man swung his ponderous weapon on high again so that he could bring it down on my defenceless head, but I was past caring what he did or was doing.

Still, the awful impact did not come in the way I had dazedly expected. It shook the ground around me and some hot earth rose from the place of contact and fell over my now partly-exposed face. Otherwise, it did not do me any damage, and it was a few seconds before I realised that the club had not struck me at all. Its spiked head was buried in the ground where my head had been, but evidently I had wriggled clear while it was falling and the momentum of the swing had caused the other man to stumble forward and, losing his equilibrium, he had fallen heavily for a second time. I do not know how it happened, but it certainly did happen that I was on my feet in an instant, and, all fighting instincts of an Anglo-Saxon nature having gone out of my head, I struck at the fellow as he struggled to rise. But he rolled over too and thus evaded my first smash at him, and though I continued to rain club-blows upon his head they

either missed entirely or did not seem to have much effect upon him. Perhaps I had not now the strength to put much effort into my club-swings, but at any rate I prevented him from getting to his feet. The yelling ring of onlookers parted as the man on the ground continued to roll towards them and in a moment or two he had passed through, with me hitting at him as often as I could raise and let fall my club. I think I was now insensible to the yelling crowd around and to everything else except the rolling object in front of me, and I did not notice that we were now on the bank of the river. In fact, the last thing I remember of the arena is that just as I aimed a particularly vicious swipe at the encased figure rolling away from me it rolled right into the river and that I, carried forward by the impetus of my futile blow, fell in headlong after it.

The water was deep and I sank in it like a stone, but somehow I retained my consciousness, and after striking the bottom I bobbed to the surface again with the club still in my grasp. Meanwhile the other man had climbed into a canoe floating near and, after aiming a ferocious smash at my head which, luckily, missed, he dropped his club into the water and, reaching over the side of the canoe, hauled me in beside himself.

At first, although half-drowned and suffering great pain from my shoulder, I tried to keep hold on my fast-fading senses, but I soon gave up the attempt and lay still, gasping, and waiting for the other man to finish me. Vaguely, I was aware that the canoe was now drifting down the river, that the natives who had been spectators of the fight were running along the bank, shrieking, shouting and throwing spears, and presently a dull droning sound which swelled suddenly into a mighty roar shut out all other noises—and as oblivion finally engulfed me I had a

dream-like impression that I was being tossed over a gigantic waterfall.

When I next realised that I was alive I was lying on the sandy beach of a swirling pool at the base of a thunderously-booming wall of falling water and my own comrades were bending over me.

‘Where is the other man?’ were my first words, I am told.

‘Most likely he’s at the bottom of this pool here,’ someone answered with a laugh. ‘Don’t worry about him. We know you had a fairly rough time, but now it’s all over—if we can get away from here.’

‘How do you fellows happen to be here at all?’ I asked.

‘Oh, our story can wait, old man,’ put in Big Sam kindly, ‘but in the meantime if we don’t get away from here quick and lively the natives will make sure that we’ll stay for ever.’

But we did not stay for ever. I recovered quickly and by sunset we were on the other side of the ranges, in friendly country. During our escaping journey I had learned that my comrades had not known of the attack upon me. In fact, I had not been missed until well on in the afternoon, and they had then picked up my tracks and followed me. When signs of the fight had confronted them they knew I had been carried off, and had then tracked the natives into their village. They had scouted around all night and had read the meaning of the preparations being made for my slaughter. Knowing the intricate *tapoo* laws they had realised why I had not been killed at once, but they also knew from the signs of preparation for the feast that the priests had not been long in discovering how to cause my death without risk of incurring the consequences of breaking the *tapoo* laws. Therefore, they had prepared to rush



the village in the morning and had been in the very act of crawling up to it when they had seen the personal fight. They saw that I was winning and had delayed their onrush in the belief that a better chance of rescuing me would offer during the excitement of the people when the fight was over, but, on realising that I was in the drifting canoe, had gone off down the river to intercept it. They had got me, and apparently the natives, knowing of the waterfall, had not followed. Hoping that they would be too late to follow us now and forcing our rate of progress as much as possible, despite the fact that I had now developed a fever, we reached a white man's settlement three days later. There, I received some necessary attention from a man who, according to the beliefs of some of the other men of the place, had been a doctor over in Australia or somewhere at one time, but as he was now a gold-getter in Papua and it was not etiquette in that part of the world to enquire into a man's past life they could add nothing further. Nor, beyond the facts that he appeared to be of middle age, was strongly built and of about my own height, shall I.

One day, while my own companions had gone out hunting and I was lazily watching him crushing some pieces of rock in a dollying pot, he asked me if I knew Papua well, and on my admitting that I was as familiar with the great island as most white men living, he said, 'You see, I want to know all I can about the natives.'

'You should join up with our party then,' I advised, laughingly. 'We seem to be always in trouble with the natives, although we respect all their *tapoo* laws of which we know.'

'It must be rather difficult to understand some of the interior tribes' strange *tapoo* laws,' mused the doctor fellow. 'I think I shall join your party when next you set out—'

that is, of course, if your people will have me. Oh, I have some qualifications. I am not afraid of the natives and, disguised as one, I sometimes wander out from this camp alone. As a matter of fact I only got back from one of my journeys the day before your people got in——'

'I can promise you that our party will welcome you as one of its members at any time,' I assured the medical man, 'but really you should think a lot before fixing up with us. As I have already told you, we are hardly ever out of trouble of some kind and—well—life itself is very uncertain beyond those ranges.'

'Oh, I don't mind taking risks if that's what you mean,' my friend laughed oddly. 'I've been in tight corners before and always come out of them. I believe, too, that osmium is worth a lot of money at present, and I think I know where we may find it——'

'Osmium!' I shouted excitedly, my memory flashing back to a reef near a hidden native village in which I had fought for my life. 'What do you know of that metal? There are not many prospectors who know it when they see it.'

'Then, although not much of a prospector, I must be among those who *do* recognise the graphite-like mineral at sight. I am liable to error, of course, the same as many men, but I am almost certain that I detected it during my last journey. I didn't get a chance to examine the stuff closely, however, as some natives interfered with me at the time.' The man spoke deprecatingly.

'Natives interfered with me too the last time I thought I detected it,' I said ruefully. 'But go on with your story. I think you were going to tell me whereabouts you thought you saw osmium——'

'No, I wasn't. Not that I want to keep anything secret, but the whole thing makes rather a long tale.'

‘Well, I am a good listener and there is plenty of time to tell your story. Besides, here comes Big Sam and he will be interested in any account of osmium.’

The one-time doctor grinned and, as Big Sam joined us, began his story in words which, as nearly as I can remember, were the following :—‘As you may know, I was on the other side of those ranges last week, dressed only in a coconut-fibre kilt and a feathered headdress. Of course, my skin was dyed with coffee-bean stain and I could easily pass for a native if not very closely examined. I think I had decided to return to this camp when I thought I saw the dull gleam of osmium or osmiridium in some rocks on my left. I did not think any natives were near, but I hope I am not exactly a fool, so, when I saw that, in some manner, one warrior had appeared from nowhere and was bending over the rocks in question I knew that if I wanted to be sure that those rocks contained osmium I had to deal with him at once in a way that would prevent him from getting away to inform his own people, wherever they were, that I—a warrior not of his tribe—was in the country. Therefore I crept up behind that warrior and clubbed him on the head, as gently, of course, as was consistent with the fact that I wished only to render him unconscious for the time.’ (I had not paid very much attention to the speaker’s words so far, but I suddenly became more interested.)

‘Just as he fell,’ the narrator went on, ‘a party of the native’s own people who evidently had been following me, although I didn’t know, fell upon me. I fought as well as I could, of course, but as I had laid down my revolver before attacking the first native myself, I had no chance against so many, and very soon I was lying helpless upon the ground. To my surprise they did not kill me, as I believe is usual with the natives, but carried me back into their hidden

village, and I don't think they ever guessed that I was really a white man. Why they didn't kill me when they could have done so without any trouble I never knew, but seemingly they had done the right thing in sparing my life at the time, for in the village it was decided that I was a gift of the gods sent expressly for the purpose of killing some other prisoner who, for some reason or other, could not or must not be killed by the people themselves. I was not consulted as to whether or not I cared to be the public executioner, but I was made to understand that if I didn't manage to kill the other prisoner he would kill me, as there was to be a fight to the death between us, for the public entertainment. Well, the great fight came off next day before the people shortly after sunrise and a feast of some kind was to be held afterwards. But I never saw that feast, for, during the queer club-battle that was meant to dispose of at least one of the fighters, my opponent knocked me into the river which flowed past the village and fell in after me. I managed to clamber into a canoe floating near which had somehow become adrift and when the fellow bobbed up to the surface I grabbed him and hauled him in beside me. We floated off down-stream and, while I was thinking of how best to deal with him—poor fellow! he was half drowned, you know, and far more played out than I was in any case, and although I never saw his face, nor he mine, as both of us were encased in large hideously-painted wooden masks which came down over our shoulders—we were hurled over a big waterfall. Luckily for me I was not seriously hurt, but he was not so fortunate. His poor body had been cast up on the edge of the deep swirling pool beneath the waterfall and I could do nothing for him. I was sincerely sorry, for, although he was only a savage, we had been brother prisoners and doubtless he cared more for life

than I did. Anyway, I had no time to waste and I made tracks down the river back to this camp, and here I am—and I want to join your party, now.'

'You needn't be sorry for that fellow who went over the waterfall with you in that canoe,' I cried, terrifically excited. 'He was not killed and his skin would wash as white as your own—'

'Dear me—er—I mean D—— it !' ejaculated the other man, suddenly realising, I suppose, that he had been talking in a manner unusual in a Papuan camp and that his natural style of speech might be associated with some other place, 'I had forgotten that you were still under treatment and must not be excited.' He laid his hands on my shoulders with affected clumsiness and examined my eyes. I could see that he was greatly distressed over having disturbed my normality with his tale, but that as yet the significance of my words had not dawned upon him.

'Don't worry about him, mister,' Big Sam said abruptly, with a glance at me full of meaning. 'He often gets into a state like that when he's not just in the best of health. We shall be proud to have you as one of us, mister, and maybe we'll go and have a look at that osmium show, some day.'

That 'some day' has not materialised yet, and if it ever comes along not all of us will go back. As mentioned somewhere already, life is uncertain !

## *THE THREE FISHERS.*

BY C. S. JARVIS.

THERE is a very strong resemblance in character and outlook on life generally between fishermen the world over, and perhaps it would not be stretching a point too far to say that the Arab fishermen of Sinai have more in common with their opposite numbers in Cornwall and Dorset than they have with the men of their own tribes who live the ordinary Beduin life of grazing a flock of sheep and goats and growing an odd patch of barley.

A considerable portion of the population of Sinai are fishermen and they are men of all types : the hefty semi-Arabs who work in the vicinity of El Arish on the Mediterranean ; the conglomeration of all races who hail from Port Said and Suez ; and the real Beduin with his small cast net and trot line of fifty hooks or so. They are one and all extremely likeable personalities, and being addicted to a little mild smuggling of hashish when opportunity offered I frequently had members of the fraternity serving sentences in El Arish Prison, where I got to know them intimately.

The fishermen of North Sinai, however, and those that hail from Port Said and Suez were one and all keen business men, and so long as there was a marketable and catchable fish in the seas they had very little time for frivolities and side lines such as taking rod anglers out for a few hours' doubtful and to them entirely ridiculous sport. 'Life is real ! life is earnest !' was their motto, although they had never heard of Longfellow. It was amongst the more haphazard Beduin in the south that one met the definite

characters, men with the most inefficient gear and casual outlook on life, but good sportsmen withal, and possessing a far finer and closer knowledge of the ways of fish and freaks of the weather than their more mercurial and opulent brothers of the calling who dwelt in the north.

Doughty and other writers on the Arab race dismiss the fishermen with scorn and contempt as being 'fish eaters' and therefore quite beyond the pale, and there is no getting away from the fact that hobnobbing with low, no-account fellows who use a net and frequent seashores does cause one to lose caste with those noble scions of the tribes who live by camel-herding. I had many warm friends among the fishermen and I am afraid that this little weakness of mine was commented upon severely by the more exclusive county families of the Peninsula. It was regarded as a very queer kink in my character that I should find anything attractive in fishermen, and that I should actually take part in the degrading business myself was a matter that should be hushed up at all costs.

One of the most attractive of these Beduin, who live on the shores of the Gulf of Akaba, and who as a result have more or less lost touch with the tribes to which they belong, was Radwan. Nominally Radwan belonged to the How-ietat tribe of Trans-Jordan who formed the spear-head of Lawrence's Arab force, but personally I think there was some doubt about his ancestry and I imagine he was really descended from the Maghrabis (Moorish soldiery), who garrisoned the forts on the old pilgrim road to Mecca.

Radwan was my original ghillie and, though he did not belong to Sinai, I was able to see quite a lot of him and take advantage of his services owing to a slight disagreement with the police of Akaba over the question of a *nabbut* (staff) applied to somebody's head, which made his residence abroad

advisable for some time. I never discovered exactly what the truth of the incident was, as being a representative of law and order myself, and one in whose hands lay powers of extradition, Radwan preferred not to discuss the episode, but his version when pressed to explain matters gave one an uncomfortable feeling that in this world the upright and godly are frequently misjudged and that men of character when they are innocent prefer to suffer in silence. Radwan was the best man at telling a story I have ever met, and the intense gravity of his expression and the sadness of his eyes when recounting the tale entirely obliterated any suspicions as to his veracity that might have been aroused by the other and entirely different version of the occurrence as told by my *Hakimdar* (N.C.O. in charge).

Radwan when I first met him in 1922 was very 'small beer' indeed, as his gear consisted of a cast net, some rusty hooks attached to a frayed line, and a dug-out canoe. The canoe carried a sail which bore what one imagined was the sail-maker's mark—a broad arrow with the letters G.S. Only the initiated realised it was not a real Ratsey and recognised it for what it was, a portion of an Army bell tent. The mast of the canoe was another and more obvious tent product, namely the bamboo pole of an E.P., while the halliard block was supplied by J. & P. Coats, a large-sized cotton-reel. The world war, which spelt ruin and disaster to so many nations, was to the Arabs a sort of super and benignant Marks & Spencer where everything was free, and this century will be old indeed when the last of the supplies obtained finally disintegrate.

Personally I did not like the look of the canoe at all and felt far from happy when I got into it, for to describe it as cranky was deliberately to understate its behaviour. Its natural instability was such that a man with fatty degeneration



of the heart, or any disease that would in the slightest degree affect his normal balance, could never maintain his equilibrium in it, and as a matter of fact no one suffering from heart trouble in any form should have ever attempted a voyage in it.

My first and only trip unfortunately coincided with the monthly inspection visit of a large man-eating shark who makes a patrol of the harbour of Akaba every thirty days or so. His big, dirty beige-coloured fin kept skimming past our little craft, very silently and very ominously, and as the result I could not give my undivided attention to the work in hand—trolling for barracouta.

With the idea of starting a little light, chatty conversation to take my mind off large-sized fish I asked Radwan if he had owned the canoe for a long time.

He shook his head, accompanying the action with the characteristic Arab click of the tongue against the teeth.

‘No, Effendim, only three months,’ he said, adding as an afterthought, ‘I bought it from Ahmed, or rather Ahmed’s wife.’

‘Why?’ I asked. ‘Had Ahmed given up fishing?’

‘Yes,’ said Radwan sadly. ‘He gave it up entirely.’

‘And what did he do instead—shop-keeping, camel-breeding, or gardening?’

‘None of them, Effendim,’ replied Radwan. ‘He didn’t do anything.’

‘What happened?’ I pursued. ‘Was he in prison?’

‘No,’ said Radwan, ‘he wasn’t in prison, for he was a good man and in with the police. He was dead,’ he added sadly.

‘Poor chap,’ I murmured sympathetically. ‘I suppose he died from that influenza you had here last winter?’

‘No, Effendim, he was quite happy and healthy before he

died. I myself spoke to him that morning and enquired after his health and he said, "Thanks be to God, the Merciful and Compassionate, it is good."

'Then how did he die?' I demanded.

Radwan raised his head and pointed to the fin which was then very close to the canoe—much too close, in fact.

'He had him,' he said calmly. 'He knows this canoe as well as I do, for he has had three from it in five years.'

And it was at this moment that I discovered it was long past lunch-time and gave the order to 'bout ship and make for the shore as quickly as possible.

In those days Radwan was a complete novice as regards trolling for big-game fish, which he regarded as an entirely asinine proceeding, so much so that when he discovered I meant to continue to fly in the face of all the best Arab traditions his countenance wore an expression of intense gloom and utter boredom. The Beduin Arab has a fixed idea in his head that the Englishman comes from a country where there are neither horses nor cattle nor chickens, nor in fact anything that runs or flies, neither has he seen the sea before nor anything that swims in it. The English are a great race and can provide wise and just rulers; they can also make and drive cars, construct steamships, and fly in aeroplanes, but it is always a surprise to the Arab, a matter for mirth, in fact, that one of this nationality should pretend to know something about hatching chickens, the doctoring of horses, or, *mirabile dictu*, the ways of fish and how to catch them. I had badly blotted my copy-book in trying to catch fish by the laborious method of trolling a dead bait behind a moving boat, an idiotic performance, as it meant, if there were no wind, that some unfortunate Arab would have to row. Last, but not least, I had brought with me a cage, a form of trap, into which the *bint el roban* (the daughter of

the pilot, or, to be more exact, the crayfish or langouste) would walk, when anyone in his senses knew that the only method of catching this queer crustacean was by looking for him with a flare by night and planting a bare foot on his spiny shell when detected.

When I caught my first barracouta on a trolled dead bait Radwan was interested, but affected to regard the occurrence as one of those flukes that happen occasionally to very innocent and guileless beginners, and it was not till my fourth fish had been well and truly gaffed that he began to admit that there were possibly matters concerning fish that the Englishman understood. This question of a reel, for instance, that looked entirely fanciful, not to say 'sissy,' had something to recommend it, for it saved labour and that is always attractive to the Beduin, and it was over the reel that Radwan, still practically a novice at the art of ghillying, rose to his greatest heights and increased my respect for a race that affects as a form of pose to be stupid and out of date and yet can show great acumen and wonderful initiative on occasions.

It was a warm, stuffy evening and the last day of my stay at Taba on the Gulf of Akaba. Queer little gusts of hot wind were coming down the mountain gorges, ruffling the surface of the sea spasmodically and just filling the flapping sail for a minute or less, and so we were proceeding slowly, almost lethargically, under man-power provided by Radwan's nephews. He himself sat in the stern holding the tiller and telling me of wondrous catches obtained before the war, and at his feet dozed my Aberdeen terrier, a mad keen fisherman, but even his canine enthusiasm had become dulled by the unnatural and uneventful calm of the evening. I was holding the rod limply across my knees, and had been doing so for such a considerable period without any response

that I had quite forgotten I was fishing when suddenly, like a bomb exploding, a whole lot of things happened at one and the same moment. In the first place, I received a most terrific punch in the short ribs from the butt of the rod which was jerked forward nearly out of my hands ; Radwan fell off his seat ; the Scottie jumped excitedly at the thwart to see what was the cause of the disturbance ; and the reel, after one agonising and despairing shriek, threw in its hand completely and fell on the burden boards of the boat in two pieces—one, the outer shell with handle attached ; and two, the actual drum with the line coiled on it—while a third portion, the completely useless casing, remained attached to the rod. To make a long story short, I had been taken by the father and mother of all the big fish in the Gulf of Akaba, and he had come and gone !

Then suddenly the drum that was lying on the deck started to jump and tumble like a decapitated chicken and Radwan and I realised that a miracle had happened ; despite the disaster to the reel the fish was still on. This is where Radwan gave definite proof that the Beduin are a race that will show extraordinary initiative when faced with eventualities, for, though he had only made the acquaintance of a reel two days previously, he did that which would never have occurred to me, and I doubt if any Scottish or Irish ghillie would have risen to the occasion in like manner. Catching the detached drum between the soles of his bare feet, he righted it and allowed it to spin round with just the right amount of check applied and with his two hands playing the part of rings, and very efficient and sensitive rings too, he paid out the line to me and the rod which I was still holding helplessly in my hands.

‘ *Istaghal !* ’ ( ‘ Get to work ! ’ ) he shouted fiercely, bringing

me to my senses with a jerk ; and then occurred a most epic battle with the unknown monster.

The fish took Radwan's reel out till the soles of his feet must have been raw and the drum was nearly empty. Then as the boys brought the boat round and we followed in his wake Radwan began to regain line, drawing it in with one hand and spinning the reel neatly with the other. Wild rushes occurred from time to time and the drum was nearly wrenched from its fleshy bearings, but Radwan kept his head and his feet, in no way assisted by the Scottie's desire to help. Meanwhile all that I, the angler, had to do was to maintain an upright rod, hope for the best, and leave everything to a better man than myself. The minutes went past slowly till the last rays of the sun on the tops of the Hedjaz mountains died away, and still we zigzagged about the darkening Gulf in the wake of the fish, with Radwan hauling and letting go alternately and I sitting on the thwart with the upright rod like a statue of some angling notable of the past.

The end of the story is unfortunately distressing and almost heart-breaking, for after an hour and a quarter of this unequal struggle we had got eventually to the stage when it was merely a question of bringing the tired monster to the surface to apply the gaff when disaster occurred. The fish, absolutely dead beat, was lying some five fathoms below the boat and was being raised gradually to the surface by slow heaves on my part and a steady strain on Radwan's, when suddenly there came that devastating feeling of nothingness. The line coiled limply in Radwan's hand and the rod straightened itself in an aggressive manner in mine ; the strain was gone and with it the fish. Most annoying of all was the fact that as we had never seen it we had not the faintest idea of its species, so one mystery of the Gulf has never been revealed.

The largest fish I ever caught in these waters was a barracouta of 50 lb. which I killed in twenty minutes and, judging by the length of time I played this giant and his great strength and endurance, he must have been twice the size and certainly not a barracouta, as he never showed once during the struggle.

I shall never forget poor Radwan's grief at this untimely end to his protracted struggle, and the trouble is that with the Mohammedan boatman one cannot apply the universal salve that will remove all trace of heartburnings and memories of disasters if the ghillie happens to be Irish or Scottish. A stiff tot of whisky is no good to a devout Muslim, and so I did the next best thing—I purchased the fattest sheep from a neighbouring flock. Actually its fatness was merely a matter of comparison, but we sat over it at the camp fire saying, as anglers do, 'Now if I had only——' till Venus in pursuit of the waxing moon had crept well up the zenith of the sky.

Radwan has now risen to great eminence in Akaba and as boatman to Excellencies and the Great is a man to whom even camel-herders look up. He has, however, never forgotten that fight when he acted as bearings to my reel, and I believe that the story he now recounts almost passes the ordinary and generous scope allowed to anglers who lose fish. He has entirely recanted his original views about trolling, but he won hands down over the futility of the lobster-pot, for never at any time did it produce even the smallest crab !

. . . . .

Some forty miles south of Akaba on the Sinai coast there is a place marked on the Ordnance atlases as Wasit, which appears to be a very suitable name for a spot that has definitely no present and apparently no future. There is a ruined fort

there, but the town merely consists of huts constructed from palm branches in which live fishermen of the Mezeina tribe in Sinai. The Mezeina are descended from the oldest and most aristocratic of the tribes in the Yemen and claim that they came over from Arabia with the Conquest, for in the Arab world this 'coming over with the Conqueror' business is just as acute as it is with us. The Mezeina, now the poorest of the poor, are very conscious of their origin, and when you discover them plying the degrading trade of fishermen they do not fail to remind you, like the proverbial landlady, that 'I was not brought up to this sort of thing at all and merely do it to oblige.'

One of this kidney was Sulieman who, when I first met him, was crouching along on the seashore carrying a cast net at the ready and wearing cotton drawers only. I was in need of a guide to show the way across a difficult pass in the mountains behind and Sulieman at once volunteered his services.

'I am a herder of camels and not a fisherman,' he said, with a touch of hauteur, and then with the air of a retired Colonel discovered fishing the rise for trout in his spare time: 'I only do this sort of thing to pass the time and to get an odd fish for a meal occasionally.'

The skill with which he neatly flung his net over a huge shoal of red mullet, and the business acumen he displayed later when disposing of the catch rather belied his amateur status, however, and he was, as I discovered, one of the cleverest and most knowledgeable fishermen of the Gulf. In employing him, however, as a ghillie it was always a matter of honour as between gentlemen to adopt the attitude that he was the merest tyro giving me a hand for the sake of the sport and the emolument he received later for his services was, of course, merely the tips to be handed over

to those common Arabs who had assisted with bait and other matters. Knowing Sulieman, I think it extremely doubtful if the poor fellows ever saw a piastre of the money.

On the strength of Sulieman's knowledge of the country generally, his skill as a fisherman and boatman, and his undoubted personality, I had appointed him as *ghaffir* (watchman) on the western shores of the Gulf of Akaba, and this little touch of authority constituted him a very present menace indeed. There is always a grave risk in the Police that the bestowal of an unpaid Lance-Corporal's stripe on an Arab private may create something of the Major-General class with rather more than his authority and powers, and to take a wild Beduin fisherman and suddenly turn him into a Government watchman was asking for trouble, and I obtained it very quickly. The first party of Hedjaz fishermen who, failing to recognise a Government official in the ragged and unkempt Sulieman, refused to stop bombing fish after being ordered to do so, had their boat boarded by a cutting-out party and were unceremoniously slung into the sea. This was the subject of official correspondence between my office, Foreign Affairs in Cairo, and the Saudi-Arabian Minister in Egypt which I believe is still proceeding merrily. I forget the amount of compensation claimed, but whatever it is, it is well beyond Sulieman's means.

Sulieman's second exploit concerned a small party of Travel-mongers—those who travel for profit, not pleasure—who were endeavouring to get into Saudi-Arabia, late the Hedjaz, with the avowed object of visiting Mecca. I had been warned to look out for them and turn them back, but they slipped past my frontier post near Akaba, and when I heard that Sulieman had met them and was sponsoring the party I feared the worst. If it was adventure to write about that they were looking for he was the man to supply it, but



there was a considerable amount of doubt as to whether he possessed the qualities that would also extract them safely. By more luck than judgment the party was just prevented from setting forth in three very unstable dug-out canoes to cross the Gulf and land on the farther shore, Sulieman having told them with his normal mendacity that Mecca, the Holy City, was 'just round the corner,' when actually it was some 650 miles distant.

When sent for to explain his behaviour he showed his usual *savoir-faire*, not to say natural cunning, by completely taking the wind out of my sails in this fashion :

'*Wallahi !* I never knew they were forbidden to go. They came to me and said they were the friends of His Excellency the Governor. On hearing this I flung myself on the ground and kissed the hem of their garments, saying with truth that if it were the desire of the Governor that I should die I would willingly cast myself into the sea. When they said they desired to visit Mecca, how could I refuse, seeing that they were Your Excellency's friends ? If I have erred it was out of love for Your Excellency and a desire only to obey your commands and help your friends.'

Well, after half an hour of this sort of thing laid on by a practised hand even an Attila is apt to go all soft, crumple up and forget his spleen. I am certainly no Attila, for, though a plausible rogue does not take me in, he always excites my admiration, not to say envy.

Sulieman figured in many amusing situations, for unlike the average Arab he was bursting with energy and initiative and always carried out his instructions with such enthusiasm and zest that he usually caused my undoing as well as his own, together with a complete disintegration of the scheme in hand. One Christmas when we were staying with a large party at Taba at the head of the Gulf he was indefatig-

able as usual and, having discovered that the party wished to bathe but were naturally too terrified of sharks to attempt it, he explained how this could be done in safety.

‘On the shore side of yonder island, Faroan, to which I will take you in my boat, there is a stretch of sand some sixty paces wide on which the water is but three *diras* deep (about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ft.). The sand is white, the water is clear, and it is possible for a watchman with keen eyes such as I possess to stand on the rocks above and see everything that moves, even the smallest fish. Beyond the sand the water is deep and here the sharks lie, but I shall be responsible for the safety of the party, and if I see so much as a fin move from the deep water I will call out in a very loud voice a warning that a shark is coming.’

We therefore went out to the island and found everything as Sulieman had described. The water was gin-clear and unruffled and, though the deep blue depths beyond the sand-belt looked ominous and capable of hiding anything, it was sufficiently far away to enable a swimmer if warned of danger to reach the shore in safety. It was a most perfect day for bathing and the most ideal spot; there was not a breath of wind, the sun was blazing in the sky, and the water looked delightfully fresh, cool, and clear, whilst the going underfoot was hard white sand and not jagged rocks.

We put on our bathing-suits and waded in whilst Sulieman climbed to a high point of rock overlooking our beach..

‘Fear not,’ he cried, ‘I, Sulieman, am on the look out and there is no man in the Gezeirat el Sinai who has eyes like mine. If danger comes I will cry out in a loud voice.’

For the first few minutes the party experienced a rather creepy, fearsome feeling, for the thought of a high wedge-shaped fin suddenly appearing abaft one’s beam, to be followed by a sudden tearing grip on one’s leg, was rather

alarming, and, whatever precautions one may take, bathing in shark-infested water is always a nervous business. After a while, however, we forgot our fears and the party, revelling in the cool water after the burning heat of the day, had gradually worked out till they were perilously near to the edge of the white sand and the gloomy depths beyond, when suddenly there came a wild screech from Sulieman, who at the same moment sprang to his feet and waved his *kufiyah* (head-shawl) frantically.

Immediately there ensued one of the most marvellous exhibitions of high-speed swimming that the world has ever seen. As one man the party swung round in a flurry of foam and tore madly for the shore with arms and legs churning the water in overhead strokes, trudge strokes, and in fact every stroke known to the civilised world, including several new ones specially improvised for this dreadful occasion. As the swimmers rose to their feet in shallow water with heaving breasts and gaping mouths Sulieman came down from his perch.

‘Why have you come in?’ he asked calmly.

‘The shark?’ we gasped, ‘where is he?’

‘I have not seen one,’ said Sulieman. ‘I was only calling out just now to my brother-in-law on the shore and telling him to go and fetch my camel.’

. . . . .

Perhaps the queerest and most intriguing character of all was Atrash, the deaf man, who also came of the Mezeina tribe and was in fact a distant cousin of Sulieman’s, whom he hated with an intense hatred. There was some reason for this, as Sulieman had arranged a marriage between his sister and Atrash, forgetting to mention to the bride that the bridegroom was a deaf mute. One can feel nothing but sympathy for a wife when she discovers that none of her

breakfast-table remarks, instructions, and admonitions go home, and though deafness does not figure as cause for divorce in the Arab world any more than it does in our own, despite Mr. Herbert's recent Bill, Sulieman's sister decided it was not good enough, so packed up and departed. Atrash was not greatly worried about the flitting of his bride, but he was considerably concerned over the loss of the £12 dowry he had paid, and demanded its return. Unfortunately Sulieman had drawn this, and as he had celebrated the nuptials in Suez had nothing to show for it beyond the resulting 'hang-over.' All this had happened long ago, but as Atrash had only managed to collect about fivepence of the £12 in eight years he naturally felt rather aggrieved about the affair, and for this reason it was difficult to have a really cheery fishing party if the two were present. No matter how good the sport might be, the topic of conversation sooner or later got round to money and matrimony.

Actually, of course, Atrash could not talk, for he was a genuine deaf mute and came of a family where all the males suffered from this disability, though the females were normal in every way. He could, however, give utterance to various noises such as a high-pitched squeal like that of an angry elephant which showed that he was annoyed, another squeal on a different and more musical note to denote the fact that he was pleased, and a whole series of grunts that referred to such things as the ways of fish, suitability of baits, and the state of the weather.

For really important occasions, however, Atrash used a special deaf and dumb language invented by his family which was so easily understood that I passed with honours in it after half an hour's conversation. The sign for a woman I discovered was the hand swept down the face from the eyes to the chin, i.e. the Mohammedan *yashmak*, and for a

man a quick pluck at the chin to denote a beard ; and these two gestures were used to show the sex of animals as well. A camel he depicted by turning his head round and roaring at his load—a typical camel gesture—whilst a goat was a sweep of the hand to denote horns and a sudden twitching of the nose. Fish were shown by a waggle of one hand and a rapid measurement to show size by placing the forefinger of the right hand on the left arm ; wind or a gale by puffed-out cheeks, and a calm by a sweep of the hand ; the time of day was merely an indication of the point in the sky where the sun would be. I think, however, the most amusing and the cleverest of all was the sign for an ibex ; this was an extended sweep of the hands to describe scimitar horns, a pluck at the chin for the beard, and the forefinger of the right hand twiddled rapidly in the vicinity of the posterior to denote that animal's nervous little tail.

I found Atrash infinitely more knowledgeable about the ways of fish and their haunts than any of his *confrères* on either side of the Gulf and can only conclude that his disability, that shut him off from so much of that which was going on in the world, gave him time to study his trade in all its intricacies. He had not only an extraordinary good brain and quick intelligence, but he was also able to understand every conversation that was going on near him. This was not a question of lip-reading, as he got the gist of matters equally well if people were speaking English and not Arabic. In fact, I strongly suspected that Atrash had developed a gift of second sight combined with thought-reading, for whatever part of the southern shores of Sinai I visited Atrash would be there waiting with a volley of grunts and squeals and a palm-leaf basket filled with the exact type of dead bait I required. These places were some of them over a hundred miles apart, i.e. Taba at the head of the Gulf of

Akaba, Ras Mohammed at the apex of the Peninsula, and Abu Zeneima some seventy miles south of Suez in the Gulf of that name ; but Atrash always seemed to know what my movements would be far better than the occupants of my police posts, who were sometimes taken badly by surprise—and an unprepared Arab police post is a totally different matter from a prepared one. Given one hour's warning and the average police post in Sinai could put up a show of smartness, efficiency, and surrounding order and cleanliness that would cause a Company Commander of the Grenadier Guards to go green with envy ; omit the warning, however, and the scene was usually so entirely different and so painful that one prefers not to describe it. A mere half-hour's warning or less always caused a curious atmospheric phenomenon—namely, a cloud of dust on the horizon even on the calmest day that gradually settled as one drew near. The settlement of the dust always coincided with the exit and disappearance into thin air of various vague Beduin figures carrying palm branches. This had nothing to do with the proverbial Eastern triumphal reception but was merely the disbandment of a hastily raised and quite unpaid corps of sweepers. On seeing this I often wondered what the effect would be if the constables in a village in England were suddenly to rush into the street, cuff every passer-by soundly over the head, shove a broom into his hand, and set him to work tidying up the police station, adopting all the time an outraged attitude that it was entirely the sweeper's fault the building and its surroundings had got into such a shocking state of neglect.

Atrash was easily the most poverty-stricken and *maskeen* of all my disreputable fishing friends. The meaning of the Arabic *maskeen* is difficult to explain, as it indicates poor in every sense of the word—down-and-out, hopeless, and

usually unjustly treated into the bargain and poor old Atrash seemed to be all these, despite the fact that he was extremely intelligent and quick off the mark. Deafness is a terrible disability, as one only commands the most grudging sympathy from those that hear, and the usual attitude is that deafness goes hand-in-hand with imbecility and obstinacy.

Atrash's poverty was such that all he possessed in the world were his cast net and a home-made garment constructed from a gunny sack, and his food was the fish he caught and a small red berry that grew on a certain seashore scrub bush. Bread or flour in any form he seldom ate, except on those occasions when he joined me on patrol and fed with my police and car drivers; yet he seemed to keep in good condition, and if I moved down the coast forty miles he would turn up in the evening wreathed in smiles carrying about a hundredweight of fish and langouste he had caught on his way down the coast.

With the cast net he was a dry-fly purist rather than one of the 'chuck-and-chance-it' brigade, for he fished the rise. That is to say, his little deep-set eyes saw considerably farther into the water than the average eye, and when one detected him running up the seashore with sudden pauses and crouches, holding the net at the ready, he was actually stalking some big fish that was quite invisible to the ordinary eye. And when he finally cast, he very seldom failed to net his quarry.

Despite his skill, however, his state of poverty remained unchanged, until one day some three months or so before I left Sinai for good I went down to Abu Zeneima on inspection and found two Italian steam trawlers anchored in the harbour. Ashore there was a scene of great excitement, for two Arab boats were at work with seine nets and a big crowd of Beduin were hauling on the drag ropes, yelling lustily.

I walked down to the seashore to see the catch brought in and, judging by the rate at which the corks were travelling, it was going to be a big one. The noise was deafening, for everyone was shouting at the top of his voice ; but far above the tumult and confusion I could hear the high squealing note of Atrash. As I drew nearer I saw him among the mob of heaving men, but he was not hauling himself—far from it ; armed with a small switch of palm branch he was running up and down the line of toilers, screaming in their faces and beating them over the shoulders. This is one of the peculiarities of the Beduin world ; a blow delivered in anger during a squabble is a deadly insult that can only be wiped out in blood, but a hearty crack over the back with a stick when one is engaged in heavy toil is a friendly encouragement and esteemed as such. It is a recognised thing that Arabs cannot indulge in manual labour unless someone is yelling and beating them at intervals, and once when some of my tribesmen were engaged in a purely voluntary job of cleaning out an old cistern they asked me to supply a *reis* (head man) to keep them at it and beat them if necessary.

Directly Atrash saw me he ran up to make his salutations, and then, explaining hurriedly that he was a busy man, he rushed back to the gang to continue his yelling and beating. The two nets were brought ashore with a veritable miraculous draught of fishes, for they were filled to bursting-point with grey mullet and the haul I estimated was worth something like £15.

I asked my police sergeant who was in charge of the boats and nets.

‘Atrash, Effendim,’ he replied.

‘What, Atrash?’ I asked, in amazement. ‘Not that little deaf man?’



‘Yes, Atrash and no other,’ he said. ‘*Wallahi*, he’s a big man now ; he’s been working with these Italians for some three months and sells his catches to them. He’s already bought two boats and two nets worth about £50 and everybody on the Sinai coast works under him and obeys his commands.’

That night I went to call on Atrash and found him living in a tent and dispensing coffee to his men. To see Atrash in a tent of his own was rather on a par with finding one of London’s unemployed living in a suite at the Ritz, and to make matters more amazing he was playing the part of a coffee Sheikh—a sure sign of the greatest eminence in the Arab world. It was satisfactory to find that this sudden rise in the social scale had in no way affected the manners of my old friend, and his welcome was as cordial as ever.

It is such a pity one cannot end the story of Atrash on this note of a man of means and made for life. Unfortunately for my peace of mind an urgent matter took me to Taba some five days before I left Sinai, and there to greet me on the shore, clad in his old sack again and carrying his cast net, was Atrash—right back where he had started. It is useless to try and find a reason or explanation for these sudden rises to eminence and equally sudden returns to poverty that sometimes occur in the Beduin world. In Lancashire, I believe, they say ‘Clogs to clogs in three generations,’ but the Arabs are quicker than that. I imagine there awakes within them some latent urge and dormant ability to achieve great things, some hint of that lost energy that caused them to capture the whole of the civilised Mid-East in the Seventh Century, and then just as success is within their grasp they realise the futility of worldly possessions and let everything go by the board far more quickly than they acquired it.

## HENRY IRVING.

(1838—February 6—1938)

*Here on this road of life where young and old  
Press upward, soon to vanish in the dim  
Unknown, a few cling to our hands and share  
Our falterings, or pause a while to stare  
Enthralled beside us at the golden rim  
Of sunrise, at the heaven-vault manifold.*

*Thank God for these. But some there are of form  
And stature nobler than the rest, who show  
As beacons on the road, diffusing light  
Reflected from the highest : in our sight  
They linger, even death-extinguished, glow  
As stars remembered through a night of storm.*

*Thus we who saw your lofty spirit stride  
Beyond us, Henry Irving, may not grieve  
At loss : largesse you cast of knowledge, truth  
And beauty to irradiate our youth,  
Until your player's world of make-believe  
Shone as a temple, vast and sanctified.*

*The fane has fallen, and to-day's new young,  
Seeking untrodden ways, with hard red beam  
Mark scattered altar-stones . . . Yet, young or old,  
On still we go : some happily to behold  
The awaited dawn, whilst we, whose starry dream  
Came true, pass hence with faithful heart unwrung.*

LAURENCE ALMA TADEMA.

*THE PHANTOM LAMB.*

BY BEATRICE WASHBURN.

WE never knew why it was that our little boy decided he must have a pet lamb. He already had a dog, but a dog was not sufficient. It appeared that he craved a lamb. A lamb would follow him about, he said. It might even sleep in his crib. It was pretty, too. It had soft curly wool and a blunt head and you could talk to a lamb as you never could to a dog. It might not understand you, but at least it would listen. It would not rush out after a bone or fly into a frenzy of barking.

‘I wonder if someone has been reading him “Mary has a Little Lamb” or whether he has been looking at the tombstones in the village cemetery?’ mused my husband. ‘Where did he get the idea, anyway?’

‘Children have strange fancies,’ I reminded him. ‘Do you remember the time he insisted the dining-room table was a railroad train and when he shut up a dragon in the linen closet? After all, a lamb ought to be comparatively simple. Perhaps you could buy one at the next plantation.’

We were out in the country for the summer, in the deep pine forests of Louisiana where our plantation had been carved out of the wilderness more than a hundred years ago. It had not changed much in all that time. There was the same big old plantation house with the galleries running all around it like skirts, the same great live oak trees, or at least the sons of the originals, so that we lived always in a cool green twilight. Behind us were the cotton

fields and a few acres of sugar cane and the negro quarters. But no one in the vicinity had a lamb. They were too much trouble, everyone said. They were delicate and easily frightened and a baby lamb was not much use without its mother.

‘I want a lamb,’ said our little boy stubbornly. ‘Please, Daddy, buy me a lamb to play with. It could go swimming with me in the river and at night it could sleep in my room. I would name it Herbert.’

Where he derived the name of Herbert we had not the slightest idea. But then, we all know so little about our children. It is as if we lived perpetually surrounded by an alien race who are quicker and more sensitive than the rest of us and who do not even speak our language.

So the summer became one long and fruitless search for a lamb. We would ride up the road in the cool of the day into the village of St. Dominic where no one had had a new house or a new thought in seventy-five years and where the one town telephone still wore a handle on its side. We asked everyone we knew for a lamb, but they all said it was not the season. The butcher mistook our meaning altogether and sent our little boy into a paroxysm of tears. We tried dogs, but we already had three dogs on the plantation and our little boy said that kittens were not the same thing at all. We offered him an electric train and a new velocipede and a tin boat that you could take in the river when you went wading. But it was no use. The yearning for a lamb was just one of those suppressed desires that is as inexplicable at six as it is at sixty. Men have desired steam yachts and unexplored mountain peaks and fame and a million dollars. Our little boy only wanted a lamb.

‘You simply cannot have one, that is all,’ said his father at the breakfast-table. ‘You have plenty of toys. You

will have to be satisfied with something else. There is not a lamb to be had in all Louisiana.'

Our little boy did not say anything at all. He put his spoon back on his plate and the tears began rolling down his face. Children can wring your heart as well as try your temper and we felt that the situation had grown entirely beyond our control.

But it was then that our little boy adapted himself with that strange fatalism of childhood that recognises the inevitable and accepts it for what it is. We adults storm at destiny and try, in our puny way, to alter it. But children are too weak to do this, and much too wise. Surrounded, as are we all, by a pitiless and hostile universe, they learn very early to conform to it.

That evening we were sitting on the gallery watching the moon rise above the tall pine forests on the edge of the plantation. A mourning dove was calling plaintively from the magnolia tree and far off in the darkness we could hear the negroes singing. Their voices came to us as clearly as did those of the mourning doves and they had the same melancholy beauty.

*'Nobody knows de trouble I seen  
Nobody knows but Jesus'*

Our little boy was playing at our feet and he spoke up suddenly in his high, clear voice.

'You needn't bother about buying me a lamb, Daddy. I have one already.'

'You have,' we exclaimed in astonishment. 'Where did you get it?'

'Oh, I found it down by the river,' said our little boy airily. 'It followed me home. It is asleep in my room now.'

‘Let me see it,’ said his father sternly before I could interpose. Our little boy hesitated and we could hear his voice tremble.

‘It is dark in my room now, Daddy. I don’t think the lamb would like people to look at it when it is dark. His name is Herbert.’

Long after he had gone to bed we sat there on the front gallery watching the moon float like a silver bubble across the sky, above the dark forests and the pointed pine trees.

‘You know he is not speaking the truth,’ argued my husband. ‘You must teach him to see the difference between fact and fancy.’

‘What is the difference?’ I asked him. For, in fact, I did not know. In the South, surrounded by centuries of slavery and superstition, it is sometimes difficult to define the obvious. And the negroes, it developed, were all on the side of the lamb. For generations they had been obliged to accept the shadow for the substance and they had become as clever at it as our little boy.

In the morning, for instance, Herbert went out for a walk. We heard our little boy running down the long length of the gallery and he called out to us that he was accompanied by the lamb.

‘We are going into the cotton fields to play,’ he called. ‘Be sure and have breakfast ready for Herbert when he comes back.’

‘What does he like to eat?’ I asked respectfully, and our little boy hesitated for a moment. ‘Oh, he likes orange juice and toast and cereal just like me,’ he answered. ‘Can he have it in a little bowl, too, Mummy?’

So Herbert had his little bowl under the dining-room table, but it was explained that he desired privacy and did not come to the breakfast-table.

‘Lots of people are like that,’ vouchsafed our little boy. ‘Do you remember the lady who visited us last summer, the one who lived in New York? She always had her breakfast in bed.’

‘Perhaps we could see Herbert after breakfast, then,’ said his father. ‘What does he do in the mornings?’

‘He plays in the long grass down by the river,’ explained our little boy.

‘Lambs like to play, don’t they, Mummy? Don’t they, Venus?’ He appealed to his negro nurse, who weighs 200 pounds and has been with him since babyhood. We asked Venus once if her mother had been interested in mythology or had she ever seen a statue of a lady without any arms? But Venus said, no, her mama was a poor woman who took in washing. She didn’t go around looking at outlandish statues, but once she had seen the name of Venus on a beer bottle and had thought it was a good name to give her baby. It afforded white folks a good deal of amusement, according to Venus, but she herself liked the name because it was easy to spell.

‘I never did see no one eat like dat lamb,’ she declared, coming to the rescue of our little boy. ‘He’s jes’ a honey for his carrots and spinach and he eats up soup like nobody’s business.’

It was plain that there was nothing to be done with the servants. They even defended our little boy when he had thrown tomatoes at a neighbour’s white house, and if he chose to adopt a phantom lamb it was all right with them. They were his allies and his father and I became intruders.

Our efforts to see the lamb became increasingly futile. Our little boy was always ready to explain that he was out playing, or he was taking a swim in the river, or that he was

getting a drink of milk in the barn, or that he was asleep in his room and must not be disturbed. They romped together all day long and he had never seemed happier in his life. He was so happy that we could hear him singing at his play and often, I could have sworn, I heard the tapping of tiny hooves on the long galleries of our plantation house.

‘Don’t be absurd,’ said my husband; ‘you will be seeing the grey lady next.’

The grey lady is the ghost who is supposed to haunt our house. Once, when Louisiana was attached to the crown of Spain, the mistress of our plantation fell in love with an officer who was in the service of the King of France. She killed herself, or perhaps she merely died, but in any case she continued to haunt the plantation for 100 years, looking for her lover. The negroes claimed that they saw her every few years, drifting down the great oak avenue. Once or twice I thought I saw her myself, but it proved to be only a festoon of Spanish moss hanging from the trees.

‘What difference does it make?’ I argued. ‘As long as he is contented. He has no other children to play with, and since he has had Herbert he has gained three pounds.’

When we drove to town in the evening to do our marketing we always left the lamb with Venus because our little boy said he did not like to ride in an automobile.

‘I takes good care of him, sugar foot,’ she would assure our little boy. ‘He gwine to have a nice bowl of fresh milk in the kitchen and then go to sleep.’

‘Don’t let him play too hard,’ said his little master anxiously, and that evening when we went to town we bought a collar for Herbert. We found it at the ten-cent store, and it was just the beginning of the gifts we gave that lamb. He had to have a ball to play with and Venus made him a silk cushion so he would not need to lie on the



bare floor. We even invested in a baby blanket to throw over Herbert on the cool nights.

The whole thing began to worry my husband. One evening he came in quite perplexed. He had gone in the nursery to kiss our little boy good night.

‘Why don’t you leave the light on?’ he demanded. ‘I almost stumbled over a woolly something on the floor. Venus must have forgotten to put the blankets away.’

‘It wasn’t blankets,’ I said slowly, and then stopped. We looked at each other in silence. Surely our family was the first one in history to be haunted by a lamb.

Sometimes we were inclined to think that we were slowly losing our reason. Everyone accepted Herbert as a part of the household; even the grocery boy brought him fresh apples each day, and the market man saved out his choicest bit of lettuce and carrots. We had no means of knowing what a lamb really ate, for somehow we never could quite manage to see him. He bounded in and out of the back door with astounding speed, and if we never actually found him playing with our child in the fields it was because, as our little boy explained, he was too quick for us.

‘He doesn’t like people,’ he would say apologetically, ‘only me. You mustn’t frighten him, Mummy. He will run away.’

So when we saw a childish figure romping with what looked like a piece of cloud out underneath the cypress trees we did not approach or call him in. It was no use, we knew. Herbert simply did not like people. He would evade us to the end.

‘When Christmas comes the problem of Herbert will become acute,’ advised my husband. ‘Where are we going to put him, in a city apartment?’

But our little boy met that, as he met everything, with

unconquerable philosophy. In September when the baby chrysanthemums grew pink and the persimmons golden in the garden, when evenings were even shorter than they used to be and there was a hint, a vague suggestion of coolness in the air, we talked of going back to town.

‘Do we have to go?’ begged my little boy, a dot of a figure beneath the giant pines. ‘Couldn’t we stay out here all winter long?’

It was pointed out that Daddy had to go to work and that we could not stay indefinitely in Arcadia. Our little boy knew nothing of Arcadia. He only knew that the city was noisy and bewildering and that he was happier in the cool fastnesses of the forest.

‘What shall I do with Herbert?’ he mourned. ‘Herbert won’t have any place to play. He will be run over by an automobile.’

He evidently turned this over sorrowfully in his mind and solved it in the only way he knew. For when the day came for us to leave and our little boy had said good-bye to all his beloved places on the plantation, the river where he went in wading, the meadow where the sweet grass grew, the pine-needle carpet in the depths of the forest where he used to play, the pump and the milk house and the barn and the cotton fields, he came walking slowly towards the car that was to take us back to town. In his hand he carried a box and in the box were all of Herbert’s earthly possessions. There was his new collar and the ball we had bought him at the ten-cent store, his soft silk cushion, his blanket and a chain of withered flowers that we knew our little boy had made to hang around his neck.

‘Where is Herbert?’ asked his father gently, for our little boy looked strangely mature and lonely in his clean suit and hair brushed to fit his head and the new shoes that he

did not wear in the country. He raised his head and looked straight at us, with that direct and piercing gaze that children sometimes have when they look straight through us to reality.

‘He went away,’ said our child heavily. ‘He said he did not want to come to the city. He is a country lamb. He comes from the other side of the river, where the cypress trees grow. That is where he lives when I am not here. He says he will be back next summer.’

He gave a long, deep sigh, the sigh of one who has relinquished his heart’s desire. Then he climbed on to the back seat and we drove away from the plantation towards the town.

*New Orleans.*

‘ . . . NO PEACE SO DEEP.’

*Night—and in all the world no peace so deep  
As folds this bay in sweet tranquillity,  
And with the death of day’s high majesty  
Offers the benison of healing sleep :  
Slowly the shining moonbeams whitely sweep  
A crystal pathway on the shadowed sea  
That stretches outward to infinity,  
To lose itself among the stars that keep  
Unceasing vigil in the boundless sky.  
Through this immeasurable solitude  
Poignant and wistful comes a seabird’s cry,  
Seeking, as I, some mystic brotherhood :  
Silence ! Now on my questing soul must lie  
Its balm, and peace within my heart will brood.*

OLIVE GORDON HASLUCK.

## *MANGROVE AND MUD-FLAT.*

BY C. W. WARDLAW.

### I.

NOTHING is more deceptive than the cartography of marshlands. A standard map of the Caroni swamp, in the island of Trinidad, shows an extensive area, upwards of thirty square miles in all, stencilled with the conventional tussocks beloved by civil engineers. Scanning the map, a uniform area of tussocks, you say to yourself :

‘ Ah, yes. Of course ! Swamp ! ’ the unspoken but derogatory inference being that it is all much of a muchness.

Nothing could be more misleading. To the explorer, the Caroni swamp offers a hundred unexpected contrasts, of time, place, and season. At one moment you may be laboriously rowing or poling through a narrow, mud-bound channel—the swamp is dissected by a network of waterways and drainage canals—enclosed on all sides and above by a miniature forest of mangrove, in fee to a realm of green stagnation, with only the interrupted sky for guidance and crabs, mosquitoes and mud-fish for company : but, a few minutes later, you have crashed over some hidden snags and passed under an archway of branches to emerge into bright daylight again. Then behold, ahead lies a dazzling mirage of lakeland, where egret, duck, heron and water-fowl chortle among the reeds or rise in circling flight against the high-blown cirrus.

## II.

On a Sunday morning, at the turn of the season, when the first spell of unblinking dry weather invites the tropic world to new enterprise, my friend, Bruce, and I hoisted sail and set off down one of the main drainage canals in our little punt. We had all the swamp to choose from, but we did not intend to go far. Already, at eight-thirty, the sun had soared high in the heavens. Moreover, the ladies expected us home for lunch. True, we had fetched a little liquid refreshment, but we had no intention of being led into strange places.

Along the banks, dangling lines for guabin and brochet, East Indians, from toddling youngsters to hoary grand-sires, were standing about, hoping that the outflowing tide would yield some piscine reward. We, too, profited by the ebbing tide and with smooth, effortless speed were soon far down the canal. Parallel to our course and separated by a brief bank of mangrove lay the river Guayamare. Here and there, at right angles to the canal and confluent with it, were little cuts or channels. It seemed that those minor water-ways must afford a through passage to the river; that inference, however, apparently a simple and harmless bit of topographical speculation, was our undoing.

‘Let’s try this cut,’ said I, as we came abreast of a particularly attractive side channel. ‘We can go across and then sail down the Guayamare.’

‘Good idea!’ said Bruce. In a trice the bow was fetched round, the sail was lowered, and the oars got out for action.

The opening selected was the narrowest of channels, a bare three feet across, just enough to accommodate our small craft. On either side was a muddy fringe, in which the oars could be dipped—sunk would be a more adequate

description—for propulsion. Beyond was a dense thicket of small bushy mangrove and an impenetrable barrier of interwoven stilt-roots. Gaily we slipped into this retired by-way, rounded a bend, and passed out of sight of the main canal. The channel soon showed signs of being undeniably shallow, and before many minutes had passed out flat keel began to catch on the mud. However, we knew that the Guayamare, our objective, must be just round the corner.

Before we were vouchsafed the corner view, we went firmly aground, the outflowing tide rapidly depriving us of the small draft which even the lightest of punts requires. A strenuous effort at poling only served to sink the oars into the soft black mud. But we decided to go on.

Now, it is one thing to spend days sailing and poling in mangrove mud, but quite another matter when, with no willing swamp-dwellers at hand to do the dirty work, one has to descend into the mire oneself. Still, it was in the nature of an adventure to effect this brief cross-country journey, and we did not intend to be baulked.

‘I’ll get out and push,’ said Bruce.

It was a tempting offer, to sit comfortably smoking one’s pipe, while one’s companion toiled and moiled up to the knees in mud. But there are decencies to be observed, even in a mangrove swamp.

‘No. You sit tight,’ I said. ‘I’ll manage the pushing.’

In the end we compromised and both got out, having previously stripped off boots and stockings.

Holding the gunwale, we cautiously lowered ourselves into the warm, clinging mud, finally coming to rest just when the treacle was beginning to ooze over our knees. In this horrid quagmire it dawned on me that Caroni mud was not just mud ; not just a uniform blanket of seeping

mire, held in position by mangrove roots, and supported on a firm bed of clay below. What the soles of our feet eventually came to rest on was not a solid surface, but a curious transitional layer, composed of half-digested clay pellets, like pigeons' eggs, to which one's toes clung for security. On this mobile and uncertain foundation we had to depend for the thrust necessary to move the punt.

Theoretically, of course, one does not leap overboard into noisome, treachly slush in order to indulge in the curious by-ways of introspection. Nevertheless, a considerable interval elapsed before the actual feat of boat-slogging began—an interval sufficiently long to bring home the realisation that, as Sunday morning enjoyment, our position was slightly foolish. But only scuttling fishlets and chirping birds were there to observe our folly.

Then we noticed the crabs ! The higher mud-banks were alive with them, vicious reddish-brown warriors. I can still picture Bruce's uneasy shuffling as visions of horrible underwater possibilities flooded his mind. For myself, I was unpleasantly conscious of other distressing eventualities. Sting-rays we had not yet seen, though ghastly tales of their punishing tactics had more than once been poured into our ears. But a species of brute creation, locally known as the China fish, we had seen—a loathsome, heavy-bodied mud-dweller, with a mouth like a letter-box filled with sharp, rending teeth.

'Here ! Let's get a move on !' said Bruce, hauling on the boat.

It was not unpleasant plodding knee-deep through the mud, and neither crab nor China fish, nor yet the vicious sting-ray, sallied forth to molest us. So much for the tremors of anticipation. Sledgeways we slid the punt to the bend, but no glittering river lay across our track ; only

the narrow channel and another bend a few yards farther on. The tide was ebbing rapidly ; ere long we should be stranded high, if not dry.

‘Let’s try and make it,’ I said, after a breather, for mud-walking is a most strenuous pastime.

‘Right oh ! The Guayamare can’t be far away,’ said Bruce.

The next bend also held its surprise, for our narrow channel suddenly opened out on to a broad mud-flat, almost free of surface water at that phase of the tide. This basin was completely surrounded by mangrove and no river lay beyond. More than any other stream, I should say, the Guayamare has an inborn genius for meandering.

In its way it was a charming little spot. As well as the mangroves, in which dozens of yellow-headed blackbirds were communing, vines and other brittle green vegetation made a tangled barrier. On the higher mud-flats, a wealth of colourful reeds and a coarse species of fern fought for the land, while in a shallow pool a blanket of broad-leaved water-lilies made unexpectedly attractive this hidden domain. In the tepid water a host of juvenile life, shrimps, crayfish, small fry of various kinds, and scuttling crablets, kept up a lively commotion. Here, in this sheltered backwater, secure from invasion by larger predators, was a veritable hiving-place for that teeming tropical life of which one so often reads.

‘We must come back here some time,’ said Bruce, echoing my own thought. ‘But we’d better go now, or we’ll be stuck !’

So we retreated down the narrow channel, heavily bemired, but rapidly acquiring the technique of spreading our toes to make the most of the uncertain foothold. Again I thought of sting-rays and China fish, but in the end we



hoisted ourselves on board without mishap. By the time that we had removed the mud from our legs, a feeling of something attempted, something done, stirred in us. So we celebrated by lapping up the liquid refreshment.

Little did we know what the river had in store for us, or we might have delayed thirst-quenching operations till later.

The best of the forenoon was still before us, the charm of the open skies too much to be resisted, so we hoisted the sail and set off again. Farther west, where two canals meet, there is a cut or ravine as the natives call it; this links the canal termini with the Madame Espagnole river, of which the Guayamare is a tributary. With this system of water-ways we were familiar; that is to say, we thought we were.

‘We might go down this cut, row back up the Madame Espagnole, and home by the Guayamare,’ suggested Bruce.

Without more ado an obliging breeze took us on our way. Sailing with the wind in the right quarter is the most deluding of phenomena. It destroys one’s sense of distance. It puts one’s better judgment to sleep, and one forgets that the miles so easily skimmed by the grace of heaven-sent zephyrs must all be recovered by the sweat of the brow.

Arrived on the broad expanse of the Madame Espagnole, we turned upstream, lowered the sail, and began to row. That is to say, Bruce began to row, for he has an enthusiasm for such pastimes. For myself, I do not object to rowing when it is obvious that I can no longer in decency avoid doing my share. But, with real boating men around, I prefer to retire into the background, smoke my pipe, and watch the dragon-flies volplaning and the flowers shedding their pollen.

## III.

As we rowed upstream, various minor channels entered on either side, some reasonably broad, though cluttered up with snags, others mere streamlets, completely arched over by dense foliage.

‘It would be fun to go up some of those narrow channels,’ I said, for I have a passion for back streets and the by-ways of life.

‘Yes. I wish we could. We’ll make a point of doing that some day,’ returned my companion.

In the light of experience it seems that our prayer not only was heard but received prompt attention.

Negotiating one of the numerous bends and still on the look out for the Guayamare on our left, we noticed that the river had suddenly become much narrower.

‘We must be near it now,’ I said. ‘I don’t remember that the river was so narrow.’ For in past days, accompanied by an Indian guide, we had fished the length of the river.

‘Is this the way to the Guayamare?’ I asked of some Indians who were fishing farther along the banks.

‘Yes, sir. The first stream on your left,’ replied one with the promptitude of a London policeman.

This was reassuring. But, as we pulled ahead, another piped out.

‘It lead to Guayamare, but the channel all block up!’

‘Oh, let’s try it,’ said Bruce. ‘That fellow’s a pessimist.’

Farther upstream we arrived at the channel, where, perched on a tree-stump, as if to mark the spot, was a young Indian, dangling his line in the water.

‘This seems all right,’ said I confidently, as we pulled into a narrow but adequate water-way, completely roofed

over by interlocking mangrove branches. 'I don't see where the blocking-up comes in.'

But very soon I had to take back my words. As we rounded a bend, the channel became markedly constricted, the dark greenery closed in on us, roots hung down to pluck at us as we passed, and in mid-stream young trees had recently become rooted, as if to bar the way to intruders. Only by much laboured pulling could we proceed.

'This can't possibly be the Guayamare!' I said.

'No. But it'll take us across,' said Bruce confidently.

'We should be there any minute now.'

On we went, in our dark tunnel, driving ahead of us scores of enormous 'four-eyes,' those curious leaping fish of estuarine waters. Never before had we seen them in such numbers nor of such size. But there, in that oozing back-water, sheltered from their larger aquatic enemies and from the swooping hawks above, they were living and multiplying to the greater glory of their kind. As we thrust unexpectedly into a larger pool, dozens of them, startled from their wonted calm, would suddenly begin to leap and scuttle away from impending danger, noisily disturbing the water surface, very much as would moor-fowl taken unawares. For yards at a time they would retreat in disorder, like a flock of sheep bobbing uneasily over an unaccustomed highway. This scene, too, we promised ourselves to revisit—when we were safely out of our present predicament!

Left and right, as if to increase our confusion, little streamlets meandered off into the dense thickets. At each forking we had to decide on our route, hoping that our perseverance would be suddenly rewarded by a view of the broad mirror surface of the river that we knew. At length we came on a small open space and dying hope was again revived—only to

be dashed once more ! Across our route, precisely at right angles, was a rather broader channel.

‘We go to the right,’ said Bruce.

‘No. To the left,’ said I.

So circumscribed was the brief clearing that we could obtain no view of the hills for guidance. Now riding high in the sky, the sun was equally useless for direction-finding.

‘It must be to the right !’ repeated Bruce.

‘I still think it’s to the left,’ said I. ‘In any case, our difference of opinion only shows we’re lost.’

‘Well, let’s go back !’ said Bruce.

‘Wait,’ said I, letting out a loud hallo. ‘There may be someone close at hand who could give us a direction.’

‘Hallo ! Hallo !’ we shouted in chorus.

Afar off, in the direction from which we had come, a voice echoed faintly in the noonday lull. Otherwise we were alone in our green solitude.

So, with occasional misadventures, we fought our way back through the tangled channel. It was then that I began to realise the full deceptiveness of mangrove swamp : everywhere tortuous water-ways, mud and unvarying green bushes ; a small difference in the tidal level and a known channel would become practically unrecognisable. Uttering an occasional shout, and listening for the answering call, we slowly retraced our steps. That shouting business, which was vaguely comforting in its way, gave Bruce an idea.

‘We’ll pick up one of those chaps we passed and make him show us the way.’

‘Good idea ! What about that boy on the stump ?’

So we renewed our vocal outbursts, to be rewarded by shouts noticeably nearer at hand. Not too soon the main stream came into view again, and there was the stump, but no boy. The voices in the woodland, too, had departed.

Only the midday hush whispered in our ears. Once again we gave tongue, but there was no answer.

‘Damn him ! He’s gone away,’ said Bruce irritably. ‘You can never get those blasted people when you want them ! Let’s pick up a man farther down !’

So we set off, Bruce jabbing the muddy water viciously with the oars.

‘I hope they haven’t all gone home,’ said I, for an uncanny silence had settled over the land.

‘We’ll give them another shout.’

Which we did. To our astonishment, a voice answered timidly from the direction of the deserted stump, but in the matted foliage it was impossible to distinguish a human figure. Scenario writers have made much of their heroes or villains escaping their pursuers by dodging through a mangrove swamp under cover of night. It is wrong ! No one could make his way through a real mangrove thicket by night ; while, in the full light of day, the close tangle of roots, branches and leaves afford the best of cover.

‘Hallo !’ we shouted. ‘Hallo ! Come out ! We want you !’

‘You go shoot me, boss ?’ came a thin voice from the greenery.

‘No ! You blasted fool !’ I replied. ‘We want you to show us the way.’

‘You not shoot me, boss ! You not lose me in jail ?’

‘No, you infernal idiot !’ we shouted in exasperation. ‘Come out and show us the way to Guayamare.’

A rustling of leaves announced the approach of the fearful one.

‘I afraid. I thought you go shoot me, boss.’

It was the East Indian boy who had been fishing from the stump.

‘You know the way to Guayamare?’ we asked.

‘Yes, sir!’

‘Quite sure?’

‘Sure, sir.’

‘The quickest way?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Well, hop in!’

Down the Madame Espagnole we went in search of the Guayamare, unlessoned hope again assuring us that in the end we should not be so very late for lunch. The wind being serviceable, we hoisted sail and felt that all was not lost. The East Indian fishermen whom we had passed earlier were reclining on the bank, a smoking fire intimating the existence of such remote things as food.

#### IV.

‘This is the cut, sir,’ said Dahabal, our newly acquired guide.

‘But this is not the Guayamare,’ I remarked.

‘It lead there, sir. That white stump is the mark.’

The idea that one is pursuing a short-cut is always attractive and one is lulled into forgetfulness of certain proverbs which have a nasty habit of proving correct. But we had no fears. This short-cut looked so travelled and free from snags that we did not, even for a moment, think that it might prove the long way round.

‘How long since you were here before?’ asked Bruce.

‘Not too long. Just the other day,’ replied Dahabal.

‘Last week?’

‘No, sir. Two or three, some weeks ago.’

Of course, he had not been there for months. But we still had faith—until our guide had us fairly aground in a

narrow channel, roofed over by dense foliage, and surrounded by an amazing tangle of roots on all sides.

‘I thought you said this channel went through?’ said Bruce in exasperation.

‘Oh yes, sir. Right through.’

‘Then, get out and push!’ said the irate one.

To the absent Dahabal I raise my hat in respectful salutation. He was a little wisp of a man, spindly of leg and arm, but in a moment he was overboard, knee-deep in mud and water, and briskly pushing us along. A little patience and endurance and we should be there. In our selfishness we were not thinking of the one who toiled. Alas for our optimism. Another fifty yards through the cluttered maze saw us at a complete standstill, with a new growth of roots and branches barring our way. Grimly and at length we said what falls to be said on such occasions.

Dahabal we now sent forward to reconnoitre, and, bidable as a servant of a lifetime, he set off along the bed of the stream. It was the only way to make any progress through that web of mangrove.

Left to our own devices, we had time to ponder our misfortune and discomfort. The noonday heat beat down on us, creating in our shaded morass a rank muggy closeness. In this stifling gloom it seemed as if Dahabal—blast his ignorance!—would never return. *Faute de mieux*, we tried to give ourselves over to the interest of our surroundings: mangrove, blue-black mud, clammy warmth, and all around a strange livid verdure in which no birds sang.

Of course, Dahabal only returned to tell us that the cut ‘was all choke up.’ So once more, after much dreary navigation, we found ourselves back on the Madame Espagnole. This time, we vowed, there would be no more mistakes, even if it meant a back-breaking row. With such

pious thoughts for company it was not long before we came to a broad channel, partly masked by snags.

'This is the Guayamare !' said Dahabal.

'You're sure ?'

'Yes, sir.'

So we landed him on his own bank, cheering him on his way with suitable recompense.

'That's typical of those chaps,' said Bruce. 'Always know everything till you try them. Then you pay for your mistake.'

## V.

As we rowed upstream we kept a constant look out for familiar objects, now telling ourselves that we remembered this or that, but more often thrown into uneasy uncertainty as the riverscape presented new and unexpected vistas. The truth is that our assurance that we knew our way about had been severely shaken.

'I wish to goodness they'd publish a decent map of the swamp !' growled Bruce.

Turn about we rowed, tugging on the oars with grim, unrelenting viciousness, working off our spleen. Once again the banks closed in on us and snags and mangroves began to bar our way. Yet the place bore an undeniable air of familiarity. Somewhere a still, small voice reminded me that we had been caught that way before.

'Well, I'll be blowed !' said Bruce in consternation. 'Where, in God's name, are we getting to this time ?'

Grimly I plodded away with the oars, impeded in my stroke by the vegetation encroaching on either side. Then, at last, to our delight, came a gap in the wall of mangrove and on our left the friendly shoulders of the Northern Range rose up before us. A moment later a familiar cut



led us to the canal down which we had sailed from our anchorage.

All the time, on the homeward stretch, we had been rowing up the Guayamare (which, of course, we knew so well !) and had not recognised it.

In the end we were only some four hours overdue. At my house we found that the ladies, like anxious hens, had forgathered *to organise a search for us*. We said nothing, but smiled a grim smile which they could not be expected to understand. And here, in this foolish Odyssey, you have the essence of mangrove. Relative to the great tropical deltas, where thousands of square miles of forest clothe the ever-changing, low-lying territory, the Caroni swamp is as an unconsidered trifle. But once enmeshed in those featureless tracts, shut off from familiar landmarks, and unaided by the overhead sun, mere distance no longer counts. Lucky they are who escape such fearsome bondage.

*Trinidad.*

## INGLESS AT GALGAS.

BY HILTON BROWN.

## I.

THE gunboat, flying an enormous pennon of pink-lemon-and-pink, came creeping out of the pearly east along with the first rumours of the sun. They sighted her from the signal station above Las Arenas and they woke the Governor, Don Eusebio, in the beginning of the day to give him the wireless message.

‘Surrender the island in half an hour or I open fire.’

Don Eusebio sighed. He had expected something of this sort for some days if not weeks, but that made it none the less tiresome now that it had come. Politically he was not averse to pink-lemon-and-pink ; but he was a peaceful man ; he liked being Governor of the island of Rosilla, he liked his old Colonial mansion with its carved latticed balconies and its seventeenth-century St. Lawrence presiding over the *patio* ; and now these things were at an end. Indeed, there was the unpleasant possibility that within an hour or two he might be shot—it depended on who was in command of the gunboat. Anyway, the thing to do was to surrender the island—and quick ; if these pests out to sea loosed off they might hit the *Parroquia*, they might hit the *Museo*, they might hit anything.

In the Plaza del 11 de Febrero there was a mob, not large but vociferous—all those to whom pink-lemon-and-pink meant an early and unpleasant end. They wanted, it appeared, to defend the island ; splendid idea, thought Don

Eusebio, if we had anything to defend it with. They waved their rifles—they all, quite illegally, had rifles—and Don Eusebio thought regretfully, ‘If one shell were to burst in the Plaza now!’ He temporised, sending out a message to the gunboat, now lying just off the Mole: ‘Give me an hour.’ But the gunboat wasn’t having any; punctually to the half-hour the first shell came screaming across. It burst in the *barranco* in that spot where the washing of the best families was commonly laid out; it destroyed a donkey and seven of Don Eusebio’s shirts. And at once a very much larger mob, wearing a good deal of pink-lemon-and-pink, came rushing from the highways and by-ways—a mob that saw reason with unmistakable clarity. In a matter of minutes, flags whiter than Don Eusebio’s shirts had been ran up everywhere. The brief bombardment ceased; the island of Rosilla was surrendered.

The original mob from the Plaza del 11 de Febrero, still carrying their rifles, moved briskly and unanimously inland towards the mountains. There was a firebrand girl among them called, doubtless with reason, La Caudilla, and with her marched a youth by name Gregorio who had aspired to be a leader and now aspired only to avoid an early death. The high mountains behind Las Arenas are a honeycomb of caves; the aborigines of Rosilla, it is said, used to dwell in them; but there is no reason why others more modern should not find them equally convenient at a pinch.

## II.

The geography of Rosilla is very simple to understand, for the island is shaped exactly like a limpet, sloping up from all its perimeter to the Pico de la Virgen, which may be seven thousand feet above sea-level. The limpet is perhaps ten miles long by four miles broad. It has two towns: Las

Arenas in the north with a harbour of sorts, and in the south Galgas. But at the south end of the limpet desolate cliffs fall sheer into the sea, so that there is no harbour at all and Galgas perches half-way up the limpet's longer slope and half-way up the Pico de la Virgen. Each of these towns is the headquarters of a *partido judicial*; each, therefore, contains some officials.

The lot of these officials, however, is very different. Las Arenas is by way of being a cosmopolitan international city with hairdressers, a cinema, a branch of Bata's and other symbols of the civilisation urban; Galgas is an old, old *pueblo* which has scarcely moved in centuries. The only accommodation for officials and travellers alike is the ancient *fonda*, of which it can only be said that it might be worse. Viewed from the cobbled street where the bus from Las Arenas 'terminates itself,' it is unprepossessing; a dilapidated penthouse, roofing like a cave a noisy billiard-room open to the street and commonly crowded with the blue uniforms of the Accion Ciudadana. But at the back it improves; there is a pleasant *patio* with almond-trees and hydrangeas, alongside of which are two more or less tolerable bedrooms. In one of these dwelt, after the arrival of the gunboat, the Commandante; in the other the Censor. The Spanish title of this latter official was more involved and high-sounding, but the censorship of letters was his main duty and we will call him the Censor for convenience. .

Galgas is the best point for the (rewarding) ascent of the Pico de la Virgen, and many tourists, coming with that intent, have left bitter remarks about its *fonda*. Their strictures, however, were eclipsed in bitterness by those passed daily by the Commandante and the Censor. More especially by the Censor. For the Commandante got some kick out of Rosilla; he had been born in the island, not very far

from Galgas itself, and it was something to come back there as a great man in the full panoply of khaki uniform and forage-cap with tassel. But the Censor—as he did not allow you to forget—came from the mainland of Spain, which he referred to always as ‘the Peninsula’; he thought Galgas the last word. The Commandante was a clean-shaven upstanding soldier who thought in his heart he was the living image of Mussolini; the Censor was a smaller man with smoky desirous eyes and a superb black beard; he spent a great deal of his time rolling cigarettes and making coffee for everybody in a little patent machine of which he was inordinately proud. It was very bad coffee. He hated the Commandante because—coming from ‘the Peninsula’—he wanted to feel superior; but the Commandante’s uniform and medals and his Mussolini face and the salutes and all were too much for him. The Commandante patronised him, but unbent at times to deplore with him the backwardness of Galgas and the limitations of its *fonda*; on such occasions they would agree that but for Manuelita the place would be intolerable altogether.

This Manuelita was an odd sort of girl, an incongruity, a puzzle. The *padron* said she had been at the *fonda* a long time, but the Commandante and the Censor doubted this. She was not a Galgas type; her hair had been permed at no very recent date, she used lipstick lavishly, and on Sunday afternoons she wore what were unmistakably Las Arenas clothes. She had a queer air of having once been somebody important. Now, doubtless, she was maid-of-all-work at the Galgas *fonda*; but—she didn’t fit in. She was too agreeable for a serving-maid in some ways, not agreeable enough in others; and on at least one occasion the Commandante thought he caught her forgetting that her name was Manuelita. A puzzle, a mystery indeed; *why* was she there?

These conundrums, however, vexed the Commandante and the Censor less than her apparently unassailable virtue ; it seemed indeed hard that the one presentable young woman in this wilderness should hold herself aloof from the only officers and gentlemen it could boast, when with a little adjustment everything might have been so comfortable all round. And then, as the days went on, there developed in the already antipathetic bosoms of these officers and gentlemen the horrid suspicion, in either case, ' Is she as inaccessible to the other fellow ? ' The Commandante allowed the Censor to think this thought and the Censor did not discourage it in the Commandante. Hidden, suppressed and trampled down, it festered and grew. The Commandante, emerging from his room upon his lawful occasions, would be seized by the suspicion that the Censor was eyeing him through the crack of his door ; the Censor, approaching the *fonda* of an evening, would have an illusion of the Commandante lurking behind his inadequate window-curtains. The Censor would think, ' Has that stuffed Mussolini an assignation ? ' ; and the Commandante, ' Has that black-bearded chimpanzee been making headway ? ' . . . And presently and severally these two official gentlemen made the astonishing discovery—never mind how—that Manuelita was rarely in her appointed room at nights ; and what did *that* mean ? Only perhaps that she was trying virtuously to avoid themselves ; but then again perhaps not. She was an amazingly good-looking girl anyway : but *was* that other fellow——? ?

The days—long days—went on.

### III.

Few visitors—especially since the outbreak of war—came to the *fonda* at Galgas. There was a travelling Inspector of

Telegraphs, whom the Commandante suspected of Communist leanings and whom the Censor suspected—as he suspected everybody—of Manuelita leanings. There was an agent of the *tabaceria* and another interested in bananas. These were not gentlemen, and as soon as it became evident that they had no games on with Manuelita—or rather that she had no games on with them—the Commandante and the Censor took little interest in them. They played dominoes with them and the Censor made them coffee in his little machine, but that was all. But then one evening an astonishing novelty occurred. The Commandante and the Censor—who, as usual, were keeping an eye on each other at the time—saw a crowd round the bus and in the midst of it an odd-looking fellow, bare-headed and roughly dressed in a sweater and flannel trousers. There was a shrill uproar of all the small boys in Galgas shrieking, ‘Pehny ! Pehny !’ and the whisper went hissing round, ‘Ingless !’ Manifestly it was an ‘Ingless’—one of those wandering maniacs complete with rucksack, bulldog pipe and a copy of the *Daily Mail*. The Commandante and the Censor lost interest ; it was their experience that wandering Englishmen were not dangerous to—or interested in—Manuelitas.

The Ingless caused, as usual, a good deal of commotion in the *fonda* ; he wanted a bath, he wanted whiskey and there was neither the one nor the other ; he had to make do with a bidet and cognac. Presently he came in to supper, still in his sweater and flannels ; he was a young man, fair-haired, sunburnt, anxious to be pleasant. He bowed very correctly to the Commandante and the Censor (though unfortunately in the wrong order) and said, ‘Buenas noches, Señores.’ It seemed he spoke Spanish, hesitatingly but intelligibly. Manuelita made burning eyes at him, but he paid no attention, so thereafter she served him last, with cold

soup and all the nastiest pieces of the stew ; he did not seem to mind. His ideas, it appeared, were set above Manuelita ; he aspired to climb the Pico de la Virgen. He had been told it could be done comfortably in a day. He had been told there was a very fine view.

‘ Perfectamente ! ’ said the Commandante and the Censor, thinking, ‘ You mutt ! ’

The Ingless supposed he could get a guide.

The Commandante—who knew nothing about it—said ‘ Undoubtedly ’ : the Censor—who had no intention of doing anything—said he would arrange it. But nobody, with the possible exception of Manuelita, observed that the *padron*, who, as usual, was leaning against the window and staring at his guests, shuffled his feet and cleared his throat and looked heavily uncomfortable. The Ingless asked who was the right person to apply to, and the *padron* said characteristically, ‘ Manana.’ They left it meantime at that.

But the next evening the Ingless was again at supper and he had *not* been up the Pico. He was very cross and much less anxious to be pleasant, because he had not been able to find a guide. The regular man had ‘ gone to the war,’ another said he had forgotten the way, a third and a fourth were engaged on domestic or agricultural affairs. One mule was sick, another had gone to fetch sulphur for the vineyards ; and so on and so on. The Ingless, who had served some time in the East, knew that all these were lies and evasions ; what he wanted to know was—why ? He was offering good money—not notes but solid cart-wheel *duros* ; it wasn’t his experience that these were readily refused. He said, in worse and less careful Spanish than usual :

‘ *Bastante !* I’ll go up by myself.’

The *padron*, lounging at the window, shifted his feet and muttered that it was ‘ muy mal, muy difficil.’ The Com-



mandante snorted in contempt ; *that* wasn't the way to stop an Ingless, and anyway, why stop him ? Let him scramble about on the Pico, and if he fell over a precipice, what about it ? The Ingless apparently agreed.

'I will go up to-morrow morning,' he said very firmly and finally. 'Have the favour to call me at five.'

The Commandante lit a cigar ; the Censor began his mysteries with his little coffee-maker ; the *padron* shuffled his big feet and stared at the floor. But Manuelita gave the Ingless a hard, hard look.

#### IV.

That day chanced to be the *dia del plato unico*—that curious constraint of present-day Spain under which twice in the month you must subsist at each meal on a single dish and that primitive. Perhaps the *plato unico* of the Galgas *fonda* that evening disagreed with the Commandante or with the Censor or with both ; at any rate, very soon after the Ingless had gone to bed, these two officers for the first time laid their cards on the table in regard to Manuelita.

Said the Commandante suddenly, after a long and gloomy silence :

'Señor, I accuse you of knowing where Manuelita passes her nights.'

The Censor was taken aback ; in his heart he was afraid of the Commandante because the Commandante was his superior officer and might have him sent to some horrible place, and because he *did* after all look very like Mussolini. Besides, the Commandante was a local man and knew secrets. He paused so long that his coffee machine boiled over and made a horrible mess.

'Señor,' he said at last, 'if you were not my superior officer, I would accuse you of the very same thing.'

The Commandante snorted.

‘I know nothing whatever about it. All I know is that two nights, three nights, perhaps four nights a week she does not sleep in her room in this hotel.’

The Censor, studying him with his smoky eyes, saw suddenly and finally that this was the truth. He began to mop up the overflowed coffee.

‘And I,’ he said, ‘am in exactly the same position.’

‘Do you swear that?’

‘I swear it; as a gentleman of Spain. And you?’

The Commandante could not reply that he swore it as a gentleman of Rosilla; he said merely:

‘Of course.’

The Censor said, ‘Permit me,’ and passed him a cup of coffee. Very slowly and grudgingly he said:

‘On my honour as a gentleman I have had no success whatever.’

‘Nor I.’

‘Then, Señor Commandante, where does she go?’

‘I cannot imagine.’

‘I can *imagine*. But what good are imaginings? We must *know*. There must be a reason.’

‘Perfectamente!’

‘The reason is—masculine.’

‘Claro!’

‘Not—not that fellow in the Telegraphs?’

‘No, no; it happens when he is not here.’

‘Not the Banker?’

‘No. I have had him watched—for other reasons.’

‘Then—who can it be? She knows few in Galgas.’

‘Very few. We must find out.’

‘Perfectamente!’

‘You and I together.’

‘Claro!’

‘You will work with me?’

‘But certainly, Señor Commandante! But certainly.’

They began to sip their coffee, each thinking, ‘Well, anyway, that tapes down *him*!’

## V.

On the morrow, the brilliant Rosilla morrow, the Ingless had an interesting day.

He was *not* called at five, but he got up at five, found Manuelita already astir and commanded her to bring him some tea. When she brought it he looked at her—seriously—for the first time; she was tousled, slattern, draggled, she might have been crying or wandering about half the night. Lacking its lip-salve her bold little face looked suddenly pathetic and fallen; he thought, ‘They work her too hard; these Continentals always do; you wouldn’t catch a British girl slaving like this.’ He asked, ‘How much do they pay you, Manuelita?’ and she replied sulkily, ‘Nothing; I am the niece of the *padron*.’ And he thought, ‘Why does she tell me that silly lie—she quite manifestly isn’t.’ He was on the point of asking her when she turned on him her most ravishing expression—which was ravishing indeed—and said:

‘Señor, do not go.’

The Ingless humoured her. ‘Why not, Manuelita?’

She exploded into vivid Spanish too quick for his ears; he caught the words ‘*Peligro arriba*’ and ‘*frio, frio, demasiado frio*.’ It was dangerous, was it? and cold. Who’d ha’ thought it?

‘I like dangerous places, Manuelita; I like cold.’

‘No! No-no-no-no-no! Señor, do not go. Pa-lease!’ And she made eyes at him tremendously again. So tremen-

dously that this time she overdid it ; she quite frightened the Ingless. He thought, ' Blast the girl ! ' drank up his tea, took his long stick, and presently, on the hillside among the scattered *pinos*, he forgot all about her.

It was a lovely morning—cold, reddish, with the usual sea-fog that should lift with the rising sun. Tramping steadily upwards over the dry volcanic gravel that slipped and rustled under his feet, the Ingless thought, ' I was a fool to bother about a guide ; the whole island slopes upwards ; you've only to follow your nose and keep climbing. The worst that can happen to me is to get tied up in some of the *barrancos* and to have to climb through them instead of going round. What about it ? I've got the day before me.' His spirits rose high, his legs were going well, he was tough, he'd be there in no time. Ploughing upwards through the tiresome gravel, he sang himself a little song ; far better without a guide—far better. An ancient dried and disintegrated lava flow insinuated itself upon his right ; but the pine-wood ascended alongside of it—thicker trees with astonishingly green grass growing among them. Dry as bone, of course, but pleasant—splendidly pleasant. The Ingless sang ; and away to the east the sun, a red disc, came hoisting through the fog.

At about five thousand feet the pine-wood suddenly came to an end on all sides and the Ingless came out into an astonishing desolation of bare slopes and tortured crags, ruddy with the sun behind him. It was a chilling sight—so vast, so ugly, so inhumanly contemptuous of man ; and it was going to be a long, arduous and—on that volcanic rubbish—a particularly exhausting climb. The Ingless halted a minute with a sudden revulsion of feeling ; his spirits that had been so bright sank, for no very obvious reason, to zero. He thought, ' What's the matter ?—can it be the altitude ? '

It couldn't be—not at five thousand feet ; but it was a daunting place, a dismal place, so harsh, so crude, so savage, so anti-human. He sat down for a little on a projection of lava and smoked a pipe, but it did not make him much happier. Probably—nay, certainly—there was a better way up ; curse these guides !—what *had been* the matter with them all ? Oh, well, the shortest way's the soonest over ; up guards and at 'em once again.

The Ingless knocked out his pipe and up-guarded. But he had not progressed a hundred yards up the blank sun-struck slope when there was an explosion from somewhere, a rattling bang that ran all round the rocks, and something came with the spinning whack of a flying golf-ball into the dust and gravel a few feet above him.

The Ingless halted in his tracks and his stick fell out of his hand. His thoughts were, successively, 'That was a near thing !' 'Who on earth can be firing up here ?' '*What* on earth can he be firing at ?' His mind, you must remember, was attuned to the idea that he was advancing into an utter solitude, destitute of life—as, by all accounts and experience, he should have been. The interruption was incredible, miraculous ; it was as if a devil had sprung out of the ugliness all round and hurled a stone at him. He even toyed for an instant with the natural solution—some sort of eruption, some sort of volcanic projectile. But almost immediately he gave that up ; it was a shot all right, a bullet all right. As there was no known species of game in this desert, that must mean either that someone was shooting at *him*, the Ingless—which was absurd—or else that someone was shooting at random, in which case the shooter was a criminal idiot and he, the Ingless, rather a lucky fellow. Anyway, it wouldn't happen a second time. Some muleteer, perhaps, amusing himself . . .

The Ingless picked up his stick and took six long paces forward and upward. He would have taken a seventh, but as he braced himself for it that curious hidden reverberation broke again, and this time the spinning whack in the gravel took place just where his seventh pace would have carried him. The Ingless jumped back hastily and dropped his stick again. The incredible was true, then? Someone was firing at *him*.

The echoes of the shot died away; there was an impenetrable silence. A pair of ravens lifted themselves out of the pine-wood and hung irresolute and perturbed; otherwise the nightmare mountain-side remained as before—blank, dead, without movement. And then, in the increasing sunlight, the Ingless saw that, three or four hundred feet above him, the barren slope reared itself into a scarp of broken crags, and in the crags there were dark holes and patches. Caves? Must be. And peering more closely the Ingless saw that in these holes there were human figures, tiny insignificant yet somehow menacing. So *now* what?

As the Commandante had known, it is ill stopping an Ingless who is bent on sporting adventure; the principal feeling of this particular Ingless was one of annoyance at the delay. 'There'll be all sorts of fuss now,' he thought. 'They'll come hanging about me. Begging.' He unslung his glasses to have a better look at them and then he put them back. Better go slow here; better let them know I'm harmless. He took out his white handkerchief, tied it to his stick and began waving it to and fro above his head.

The enemy's response was unmistakable. Six pygmy rifles were levelled, there was an infinitely louder reverberation and six uncompromising bullets came all round the Ingless. Three zoomed over his head like particularly malignant wasps, one skated past him in the dust, one hit

a block of lava and sent up a cubic foot of it in powder ; and the sixth neatly snapped his stick and brought his polite gesture fluttering to the ground. There was no doubt about it at all.

Despite proverbs to the contrary, the Englishman does sometimes know when he is beaten. This particular Ingless turned back. In telling the story later he did not mention that he ran, but the fact is that he did—like a hare. And shot after shot came—harmlessly but deliberately—after him all down that long hundred yards to the *pinos*.

The forenoon was still young when he descended again into Galgas. The Ingless was always an object of interest there, but to-day he felt himself less so than usual—and also more. He was watched more closely but also more covertly ; and for once the swarm of brats with their chorus of ‘ Pehny ! Pehny ! ’ did not beset him. He reached the *fonda* a very, very angry man. In the eating-room the Commandante and the Censor were sitting, reading yesterday’s *Hoy* and considering—and perhaps already repenting—their pact of the previous evening. The Ingless was just aware that as he entered the room the *padron* in his black hat and his big boots came shambling in behind him. Said the Ingless, spluttering a little :

‘ Why did you not tell me ? ’

The Censor said pleasantly, ‘ Diga ? ’ The Commandante said boredly, ‘ Señor ? ’

‘ There are people on the Pico.’

‘ Si ? ’ But they stirred in their seats.

‘ People with guns.’

‘ Si ? ’ But they put down their papers.

‘ They shot at me. At me, I tell you. Why ? ’

For a moment there was a completely dead silence, broken

only by the heavy breathing—the very heavy breathing—of the *padron*. Then the Commandante said loftily :

‘ They were, of course, soldiers.’

‘ They weren’t soldiers. They were just people. *Hombres ordinarios*. With guns.’

‘ It is incredible.’

‘ It is true.’

‘ It is impossible. There are no people on the Pico.’

‘ I tell you there are. Ten—twenty. With guns. In the caves up there.’

At the word ‘ caves ’ there was another monstrous silence ; in it the Ingless became aware that the *padron*, in the doorway, was shaking from head to foot. Then suddenly the silence exploded into uproar. For the Commandante leapt to his feet, crumpling *Hoy* in his fists and roaring like a bull.

‘ Now I know where she goes at nights. Now I see it all. She is taking food ; and from here, from here, this very place. *Los Communistas ! Los Communistas !* ’

The *padron* burst into speech, the Censor burst into speech, the Commandante burst into further and further speech. All three shouted and gesticulated simultaneously—at each other, at the Ingless. The room became a babel of flying, hissing, thundering Spanish, far beyond the Ingless’s comprehension. Deafened and disgusted, he fell back on good plain English.

‘ Well, I think it was a rotten show. And I think it was damned unsporting of you not to tell me.’

They took no notice of him whatsoever ; the riot swelled louder, the Censor banging his fist on the table, the *padron* waving his arms, the Commandante stamping and roaring. Bleakly furious, the Ingless drew himself up. He said, with dignity and still in English :



'I've had enough of this. I'm going back to Las Arenas. *Adios*, "gentlemen"—I don't think!'

He went out. The *padron*, for reasons of his own, followed him and went clattering down the backstairs and poured himself—and drank—a good half-tumbler of brandy.

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, VI.

Left alone in the eating-room, the Commandante and the Censor faced one another across the table, breathing hard. As if by mutual agreement they ceased shouting, but the Censor said with sibilant tension:

'So? What will you do now?'

'Do? What will I do now? In the first place I will arrest the *padron*. I will say—I will say he has disobeyed the *Ley del Plato Unico*. Then I will say nothing for a little. Then one night—ha! ha!—I will take men and follow *her* when next she goes out. Then I will have them all.'

'You will set a trap, eh?'

'Perfectamente!'

'With our Manuelita?'

'With Manuelita.'

The Censor beat upon the table. 'You will *not*!'

'I will *not*?'

'No. No-no-no-no-no! Nothing of the kind.'

'You dictate to me, Señor? To *me*?'

The Censor crumpled; he had forgotten himself.

'I do not dictate, Commandante. But I beseech, I beg, I implore you to have mercy. . . . Our Manuelita, Señor. . . . Clearly she has a lover.'

'Claro! And supposing?'

'It will kill her. It will kill our Manuelita. She—she is a nice girl. Señor, you must not do it.'

The Commandante thought savagely, 'So it *was* you, was

it?' He burst out 'Impertinence!' and then suddenly he stopped. His little eyes narrowed, they became slightly pig-like, yet they pierced. They fixed themselves on the beautiful black beard of the Censor.

'You wish me not to do that?'

'You must not do it; you *cannot* do it.'

'Must? Can? . . . Would you be prepared, Señor to consider conditions?'

'Conditions, Señor Commandante?'

'Conditions . . . If I—er—defer action in this matter, is it understood, for example, that you give up all pretensions to Manuelita?'

The Censor stood quite motionless, trying to remember that he was a gentleman of Spain—from 'the Peninsula.' He was—and yet he wasn't—a rather pathetic little figure.

'You—you would insist on that, Señor Commandante?'

'Undoubtedly. I should require your word of honour.'

'I would give it.'

'*Bien!* But I think also'—the eyes became more pig-like, more piercing—'I think also, Señor, you would find this station in the circumstances uncongenial. I think a transfer——'

The Censor stood crumpling his *Hoy*; sudden tears—tears for 'the Peninsula,' for Manuelita, for himself—came into his dark, dark eyes.

'You would wish me to apply?'

'I should insist on it. I could help you, no doubt. One of the other islands, maybe. One of the *better* islands.'

'You—you would not trust me?'

The Commandante became suddenly human.

'I wouldn't. No. Not a yard. Nor Manuelita either.'

The Censor regarded him for the time it took him to roll a rapid cigarette. It was an unpleasant look.

‘So? I am to give her up and go?’

‘Exactly.’

‘And if I agree to this, *if* I agree—you take no action.’

‘I take no action.’

There was another protracted silence; a ridiculous tear crept out of the Censor’s smoky eye and rolled down to the beautiful black beard. The Commandante became impatient; he stamped over to the window.

‘Well, Señor, well? Do you agree?’

The Censor moistened his lips. He disliked Galgas; he was far from disliking Manuelita. But perhaps he was a Spanish gentleman after all. Be that as it may, in the mist made by that ridiculous tear he saw a Manuelita pale and distracted, with no lip-salve and her black hair all down about her body; a Manuelita on her knees shrieking for mercy for someone and getting none—none, none, absolutely none. He saw a firing-squad; he saw all the king’s horses and all the king’s men, and a boy—he could only be a boy—bare-headed and defiant and waiting . . . He couldn’t stand it . . . The Censor said—and perhaps men have said poorer and stupider and less admirable things—

‘I agree, Señor Commandante, I agree.’

## VII.

Here, of course, on this glowing moment of renunciation, the tale should end; and if you like, it may. But in Galgas, if you make enquiry, they are not so sure that it did.

The Censor certainly left Galgas—and quickly. I think he really *was* a Spanish gentleman and I hope perhaps he was rewarded. Galgas was after all a poor place for a man of his parts and—there are lots of Manuelitas in the world. I hope he found a nice one—who could appreciate his coffee.

The Commandante, one must remember, was from

Rosilla and not from 'the Peninsula'; if thereby he lacked advantages, he also lacked handicaps. Nobody in Galgas will tell you what the Commandante *did*—not if you ask till you are black in the face—but here are some significant facts. The regular guide to the Pico de la Virgen has unexpectedly come back from the war and his mule is quite well again and the two of them will take you to the summit for twenty-five pesetas. You are not in any danger of being shot at, and though you will find traces of recent occupation in the caves you will not find any inhabitants. On the other hand, if you look where you are told not to, you will see a number of newish-looking graves in a quiet corner of the *pinar*. So I am *afraid* that the Commandante——

And it is also a fact that, not long after the Censor, the Commandante too left Galgas—for a better place. And they do say in Galgas that he took Manuelita with him and that she was bearing up wonderfully and had quite forgotten that there was ever a girl called La Caudilla or a boy called Gregorio. A girl, they say, must live . . . But what will they not say in places like Galgas?

The *padron*? Oh, they shot the *padron*. It seems a severe penalty for breaking the Law of the Single Dish, so there must have been other reasons. I feel sorry for the *padron*, as I feel sorry for all who back losers . . . I do not feel at all sorry for the Ingless, who is doubtless, after the manner of his kind, innocently making big mischief somewhere else.

## BY THE WAY.

WE have now for some weeks digested or ignored, according to our several experiences and idiosyncrasies, the tempered optimism of the Big Five—I refer to the Bank Chairmen and not to Scotland Yard, nor should it be for a moment supposed that there is, or can be, any likeness or connection between them—and the stage is all set, shrouded by the usual anticipations and prophecies, for the annual revue (or should it be review?) that we call the Budget. We in this country, drilled throughout the generations and pliant by character for this purpose, if for no other, bear our financial burdens philosophically, reserving only our national sport of grumbling, and decline to be frightened even by the hatefulness of the Continent. A little while ago I had a letter from an American prominently connected with business in which he said, ‘I am given to understand that the British prosperity concerning which we have heard so much during the past few years is now definitely on the decline’; in reply I quoted Andre Siegfried’s ‘When England changes we say that she is dying—and it is never true,’ and I reminded my correspondent that we English had been told for nearly 100 years that we were definitely on the decline. We are quite used to that: we have misled many a foreign commentator in the past and are apparently destined to do so again in the future. Rockings we do not escape, the loss of Mr. Eden is grievous, but none the less without seeing the future gaily, we at least see it without despair—which is more than can be said of the people of most nations. *Infelix Austria!*

★            ★            ★

‘Revue or review’—that puts me in mind of the humor-

ous account of the spelling bee held a few weeks ago between—so we were told—chosen representatives of Oxford and Harvard Universities respectively : what we were not told and what still remains extremely obscure, is who chose them and how ? Most of them, if we are to judge by the account of the details of the contest, must have qualified by failing to pass a test—for the tumbles were truly ludicrous. ‘Macaulay’s school-boy’ possibly, a senior pupil of any good secondary school certainly, would have gone to the top of the contestants without difficulty. We were told, even, that there were failures at words like ‘loneliness’ ; and none were put at any such real fence as, say, ‘panegyric.’ A very odd contest : in how many humble homes next day, I wonder, were all the words not read out from the newspaper by one person and promptly and correctly spelled (spelt) by another ? And in the second Anglo-American contest on March 6 the mistakes were even more ludicrously elementary.

★            ★            ★

Charm is notoriously difficult to define, whether in people or books : we are only happily conscious when we find it. Elusively but yet without doubt it exists in two small volumes recently issued by the Cambridge University Press, *Some Greek Poems of Love and Beauty*, translated by J. M. Edmunds (3s. 6d. n.), and *Chinese Lyrics*, translated by Ch’u Ta-Kao, with an introduction by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (4s. 6d. n.). The latter, though equally described as a translation ‘into English verse,’ keeps (wisely, I feel) to free verse : Mr. Edmunds perhaps unduly handicaps himself by rhyme, which enforces upon him such necessities as the substitution of ‘Sue,’ ‘Joan,’ and ‘Nell’ for Heliodora, Philœnis and Xantho. A comparison between the two little

references to drink, have always a nostalgic melancholy, but there is real beauty in many of these sighings, for example Prince Li Yü's 'The Fisherman's Song' or Liu K'ê-chuang's 'Absence'; the Greeks, on the other hand, are delightfully gay for the most part and yet also have a simple gravity always in reserve. The difficulties of translating brevities of lyric perfection are practically insuperable: both authors in their different styles and ways fully earn the gratitude of the reader.

With these, since Oxford in no way lags behind, I must couple *The Oxford Book of Greek Verse in Translation*, edited by T. F. Higham and C. M. Bowra (Oxford University Press, 8s. 6d. n.), which, as its title indicates, is the *Oxford Book of Greek Verse* of 1930 translated. Scholars will enjoy comparing the two books; others will greatly appreciate having all these old felicities in a form that they can read: they will read with both pleasure and profit—not excepting the two parts of the notable introduction. 'Better a live sparrow than a stuffed eagle,' wrote Edward Fitzgerald—in that is translation summed.

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Able writer as Sir Charles Petrie is, and interesting as his biographical studies necessarily are, it cannot truthfully be said that as a book *The Chamberlain Tradition* (Lovat Dickson, 3s. 6d. n.) quite succeeds. Its purpose, it is not difficult to guess, is not so much dispassionate judgment as political eulogy, and before the composition is laid down the reader is almost driven in his own despite to criticism. Joseph Chamberlain was undeniably a great figure and a statesman possessing both vision and courage, few public figures have been more universally beloved than Austen, and of the present Prime Minister it can certainly be said that of few heads of Governments have high expectations of distin-

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out tale of events in a Scottish University. His new one, *That State of Life* (Bles, 8s. 6d. n.), is also exceedingly well worked out, but it is doubtful whether it will achieve that degree of popularity that intrinsically it deserves : it keeps, even to a much greater degree than his last, to a set of characters all life-like and to some extent characteristic of this abnormally muddled, anchorless age, but none about whose fate a reader can really care at all—especially as the author makes it clear that for most he also does not care. He makes Audrey, for instance, fall in love with a silly, cowardly, underbred little cad and know quite well that he is that. The author persists, however, in ignoring her knowledge till the reader grows exasperated, after which he allows her to acknowledge the truth and after a slanging match set herself free. The section devoted to the quixotic service of one of the young men with the ‘Red’ International Brigade in Spain is interesting and carefully compiled, but it has no real reference to the main story, and it is with Grannie alone that one can feel any quickening of sympathy, but she is only used in the Prologue and Epilogue. The whole book, seen through her eyes, might have been notable—as it is, though it is certainly clever, it is a little too much like the ordinary book of modern folly followed by disillusion—and Mr. Brown’s abilities should give us one above the ordinary.

★            ★            ★

In these days when every other novel is one of murder originality is hard indeed to come by. Margaret Tayler Yates may be commended for having achieved it in *The Hush-Hush Murders* (Lovat Dickson, 7s. 6d. n.). The title suggests a conventional ‘thriller’ and to that extent is misleading : its appositeness only becomes obvious by degrees when the reader has become engrossed in the singular and dramatic happenings on board the *U.S.S. Beaumont*,

a transport vessel of the United States Navy. It is in this unusual setting that the author, whose acquaintance with the normal conditions of the life of which she writes is apparent, has laid her unusual story. At the outset the frank and expressively vigorous slang and also the multiplicity of the characters are a little confusing, but when the reader is fairly launched he will be a hard person to please if he is not carried excitedly along. Not only is the suspense well sustained, but the characters are refreshingly alive and—which is none too common in stories of this genre—the narrator, and principal actor, Anne Davenport, a Navy nurse, is vivacious without being irritating, an attractive person whose fortunes can be followed with genuine and sympathetic interest.

★            ★            ★

The work of Mr. Wallace B. Nichols, like that of Mr. Hilton Brown (and indeed many other writers of distinction), is well known to readers of CORNHILL. His 'Two Days with the Devil,' a tale of the death of William Rufus, is still remembered and a further story of importance from his pen will be appearing in these pages in May. In his new novel, *Turn the Hour-Glass* (Ward, Lock, 7s. 6d. n.), Mr. Nichols has gone to the Wars of the Roses, and has made wholly admirable use of the strong and, in the end, ill-fated ambition which led Elizabeth Woodville, Lancastrian, to marry with Edward IV, Yorkist, and combat, and overthrow, Warwick the King-maker, only to have her sons destroyed by Richard of Gloucester and herself immured in the Cluniac Convent at Bermondsey. Out of the story of her life Mr. Nichols has woven a tale often grimly tense and exceedingly dramatic, imbued at times too with poetic feeling; this is as good an historical novel as has been published for a long time, and it is a pleasure to commend it.

G.

## THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

## DOUBLE ACROSTIC, No. 171

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answers, containing the coupon from page iv, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach him by 30th April.

'Nor is Osiris seen  
In Memphis ———, or ———,'

1. 'Their graves are ——— green to see;  
And by them lies the dearest lad'
2. 'No matter how coldly  
The rough ——— ran—'
3. 'A Face made up  
Out of no other shop  
Than what Nature's white hand sets ———'
4. 'Through discontent of my long fruitlesse stay  
In Princes Court, and expectation ———  
Of idle hopes, which still doe fly away.'
5. 'Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,  
And, ——— with something of a mother's mind,  
And no unworthy aim,'

Answer to Acrostic 172, February number: 'And in your *joyous errand* reach the spot Where I made one' (Fitzgerald: 'Omar Khayyám').

1. JessaminE (Tennyson: 'Maud'). 2. OveR (Anon.: 'Love will find out the way'). 3. YouR (Byron: 'The Isles of Greece'). 4. (Phil)Omela (Sir Philip Sidney: 'Philomela'). 5. UnseeN (Shelley: 'To a Skylark'). 6. Steep'D (Coleridge: 'The Ancient Mariner').

The first correct answers opened were sent by Mrs. W. A. Claydon, The School House, Sittingbourne, Kent, and Miss Mildred Hodgkinson, 11, Soho Street, Bolton, who are invited to choose books as mentioned above. N.B.—*Sources need not be given.*

# THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

MAY 1938.

## *THE CAPTAIN OF THE GULF.*

BY WALLACE, B. NICHOLS.

EARLY surroundings may colour the whole outlook. A youth used from his childhood to scenes of violence will see them as less terrible than another reared amid order and security, but should he ever awake to a new sense of values the reaction can be swift, bitter and even more fearful than the very violence against which he has turned.

So was it with the young Marko Pausanian, the great-nephew of Spiridion, that most notorious of the many pirates infesting the Adriatic in the first decade of the sixteenth century. Born on one of the Sporades, he had been adopted at once by his great-uncle, for he was a posthumous child and his mother had died in bringing him into the world. At the earliest possible age he was taken to sea, first as cabin-boy, then as powder-monkey, until by the time that he was twenty he had become one of Spiridion's most trusted lieutenants, with a reputation for intrepidity and fierceness all his own.

To him it was nothing out of the ordinary, that life of a pirate. It was a perfectly normal business, and he had never known any other condition. Then, suddenly, the depths of himself, hitherto unsuspected even of existence, were strangely stirred and his whole outlook wrenched from its customary orbit ; and it happened in this wise :

They had captured, after a running and more than usually stiff fight, a large two-masted galley bound from Venice to Naples. But its cargo had disappointed them, being poor in quality and not easily marketable. They had,

therefore, to depend for their best profit upon the ransoms for the passengers whom they had found on board and taken prisoner. The crew, as usual, had been butchered and thrown into the sea. The passengers in question consisted of two merchants, the wife of one of them, and a girl travelling under her care to a convent at Sorrento. There was a maidservant also, but one of the pirates had elected her as his share in the booty, and she had been handed over to him all the more willingly in that none of his comrades fancied her well-matured charms and somewhat acid tongue. 'But each to his taste!' Spiridion laughed, and let the man have her.

The others were taken to a cove on the Albanian mainland somewhere opposite the island of Corfu. This cove was one of Spiridion's favourite hiding-places, and he had built a number of huts there, both large and small, to accommodate himself and his followers and their various dependants. In one of these huts he gaoled the two men, and in another the woman and the girl.

If an idyll were possible in such circumstances, it could have blossomed in the days that passed on the wing while the pirates awaited the coming of the demanded ransom money. Marko Pausanian had never beheld anybody like her. She was his own age, she was beautiful, she had the most lovely of low voices; she was bright haired and brighter eyed, and her grace of walk might have been that of some proud, young *dogaressa* leading a masque to a music of viols. Her name was nothing of importance, it was Maddalena Foscari, that was all; she was the daughter of a merchant, deceased, and her mother had married again, another and richer merchant. Spiridion had clapped hands softly when he knew.

There had been but glances, a touch of hands when Marko

Pausanian had chanced to hand her anything ; nothing more : the seeds of an idyll only, and by no means its fruits.

Then Spiridion sent him to capture a galliass learnt to be on her way from the Piræus to Brindisi with a cargo worth the taking. He returned with the galliass in tow. He had been away hardly a week, but in that time the ransoms had come and the prisoners been released—all except Maddalena. Her stepfather had refused the amount demanded. She had, in fact, been bound to the convent at Sorrento as to a prison whence there was no returning. Her stepfather did not grieve overduly at her misfortune. How much, or how little, he ever recounted to his wife must be left to his own conscience.

As for Maddalena herself : since she was of no further monetary value—and also to avoid rivalry and indiscipline among his men—Spiridion thought it wiser in every way to cut her throat.

It was to that act accomplished that Marko Pausanian sailed back in triumph and eagerness to the Albanian cove.

‘By the Seven Virgins of Cattaro,’ cried Spiridion, ‘how was *I* to know, you shy fool, that you wanted the girl? Hadn’t you a tongue in your head, lad?’

But Marko Pausanian raged and wept in turn, sought solitude and company equally by fits, and in solitude was open of heart, but in company morose.

Spiridion nodded his completely bald head as might a wise old moneylender in the Giudecca when assessing the security offered by a patrician’s second son : for the Golden Book of Venice bears, on this page or that, sometimes secrets other than golden ! So, as might such an old Jew, Spiridion wisely nodded his head, and then looked about for something besides Time to medicine his great-nephew’s rages and sullen tears.

As a result, he sent him to Venice to make certain purchases and certain contacts. Marko Pausanian had visited Venice on various occasions before, but then upon minor missions ; this time his great-uncle trusted him more deeply.

Unknown as to his person, and unsuspected of his avocation, his sojourn in the Dominatrix of the Adriatic was generally a kind of holiday. He usually travelled as a young Athenian merchant, and his customary purchases in the city bore out the disguise. He also felt safe in Venice, and care-free—or had so until now, for though he still felt safe enough, he was no longer care-free, nor, on this visit, as may be imagined, exactly in holiday mood.

However, he went about his several businesses with a diligence that aped the normal enthusiasm in his tasks. Also, which may seem surprising, he appeared to be in no hurry to return to the Albanian cove opposite Corfu as soon as his missions were completed.

It was part of his business to become conversant with all Venetian gossip, especially that which related to the outgoing and incoming of ships, and for this purpose he never refused to make casual acquaintances. In that manner he made friends with a young Florentine in the military service of Venice, invalided from Cyprus after a wound taken there, not, however, in battle against the Turks, but in a mere civil broil, one Michael Cassio.

‘A plague upon this leg!’ said Cassio one evening as they drank together in a tavern. ‘Were I a sound man, there’s the very employment for me going begging. Good pay, plenty of adventure, and a fine reward for success—and I know I’d succeed,’ he boasted, for he was a little drunk.

‘What employment is this?’ asked Marko Pausanian idly, and then listened—less idly. Here was news.

He kept his sojourn in Venice longer than he had intended, and it was not the taverns, nor bright eyes under *fazzioli*, that kept him, but the news which he had heard from Michael Cassio the Florentine.

When at last he came home he had that news for the coping-stone, as it were, upon all that he had to tell his great-uncle.

They were seated before a leaping fire of driftwood in front of Spiridion's own hut : Spiridion himself, his second-in-command Paramythioti, and Marko Pausanian. The cove lay in a cleft between towering rocks rising sheer from the sea. It was like a crescent of fallen boulders fringing a space of sand, and about a mile across from horn to horn ; and a little stream ran down into it along a curving Albanian valley. On the right-hand side of this crescent a small quay had been built under one of the cliffs, and the water deepening from the edge of the sand suddenly, and almost without gradation, there was anchorage close in for even large vessels. The night was tranquil and cloudless, and on the ridge of the further horn of the cove could be seen, silhouetted against the moonlit sky, the furled shapes of a line of cypresses.

'Marko has brought back some mad news,' said Spiridion, and began to shake with laughter. 'My Paramythioti, we're becoming of importance i' the world, we pirates—true thorns in the flesh to Venice itself, so that they're at pains to put us down as if we were men in revolt against the state !' And he chuckled into his large grey beard.

'How so ?' asked Paramythioti, always slow-witted—except in a fight !—and sparing of speech through lack of imagination.

'Tell him, Marko,' bade the old pirate. 'I'm too wheezy from laughing.'



'We've been taking so much shipping in the Adriatic and Ionian of late,' began Marko Pausanian, 'that they've declared war upon us.'

'War?' muttered Paramythioti. 'That's good!'

'It's a jest, my Paramythioti,' cried Spiridion with a guffaw. 'The great Republic declares war on a nest of pirates as if we were the Grand Turk himself—oh, and with all proper ceremony, and a mighty admiral to quell us . . . but go you on, Marko.'

'They've organised a small fleet against us,' the young man went on, 'and put one leader in charge of it—'

'With such a fine title to him!' interrupted Spiridion. 'Tell it, lad. Listen, Paramythioti!'

'They've called him "The Captain of the Gulf",' continued Marko Pausanian, 'and he is to base his fleet over at Corfu yonder.'

Paramythioti spat into the fire.

'By the Devil, that's near!' he said.

'When I left Venice he was fitting out his fleet to sail down the Adriatic. I waited long enough to learn the force placed at his disposal. He has five galleys, well armed and very swift.'

'Five to search from Venice to Sunium and from Sunium to Smyrna?' cried Spiridion sarcastically. 'We must stir ourselves,' he went on, with a jaunty cocking of his old head, 'or the sea won't be large enough for us to have the heels of this "Captain of the Gulf" and his five galleys.'

'Who is he?' asked Paramythioti.

'That's part o' Marko's tale,' said Spiridion. 'We're so fierce nobody liked the job. Go on, lad!'

'They've sent single ships after us often,' went on Marko Pausanian, 'and always with disaster.'

'I'd sink any Venetian galley blindfold!' put in his

great-uncle. 'D'ye remember that Alfani we strung up after the fight off Rimini?'

Paramythioti spat again, and nodded.

'He came out after us with a great bluster: he'd find our lair and smoke us out like rats! That he would! He swore it on the knuckle-bone of San Pantaleone. He'll be damned now, likely, for taking a saint's knuckle-bone in vain. Body o' me, how I interrupt! Go on, Marko!'

'It became at last so notorious an ill venture,' continued the young man, 'that Venetians, and hirelings alike looked askance at being employed in it. There was a whisper of the Evil Eye; there was a hint of our having the Devil for patron—and they could find no Cardinal to come out of his snug palace to dare salt gales and curse him, by bell, book and candle, from alliance with us! I had all this from gossip here and gossip there, about the quays, in the Giudecca, and from loiterers in St. Mark's Square, but principally from a Florentine in the Venetian service named Cassio. This man told me that it had come to such a pass that no man would take a commission to seek us out and fight us. At length, exasperated by our own continued activities and the activities of every other pirate from here to Chios, the Council of the Ten decided to make it worth a man's while to take the risk, so promulgated this gilded appointment of a "Captain of the Gulf," with an admiral's pay and rank, and a fleet to command instead of a single ship. Even then, the post, as Cassio said, was going begging, and was even expected to be put up for auction, when a man suddenly came forward and offered to comply with the conditions. It is he who is now fitting out his five ships.'

'Who is he?' Paramythioti asked again, looking up suddenly from a bovine stare into the heart of the fire.

‘He calls himself Conrazzo,’ replied Marko Pausanian. ‘It is given out that he is a Dalmatian and knows the coast as his own hand.’

Spiridion grunted, and then laughed.

‘Let him follow my wake through some channels I know,’ he said, and winked in the firelight at Paramythioti. ‘Did ye clap eyes on this Conrazzo?’ he asked abruptly, turning to his great-nephew.

‘No, uncle.’

‘If you’ve not seen *him*, then he’ll not have seen *you* . . .’ mused Spiridion aloud.

Marko Pausanian’s eyes glittered. There was a short silence, Paramythioti stroking his long moustache the while and looking from uncle to nephew with swift, cunning, foxlike glances, to and fro, from face to face.

‘The crews were not full,’ said Marko Pausanian suddenly. ‘They spoke of completing their fighting roster from the garrison at Corfu.’

‘At Corfu . . .’ murmured Spiridion, and began caressing his beard with both of his hands together, letting it flow, as it were, from one to the other.

‘I could play the spy very well,’ said Marko Pausanian, and watched his relative with vivid and speculative eyes.

‘At Corfu?’ asked Spiridion, changing in the repetition his tone from ruminative to sharply interrogative.

‘At Corfu,’ replied Marko Pausanian, and rose nimbly to heap more wood on the fire.

Spiridion looked at Paramythioti and received a nod in return.

‘What do you say, uncle?’ asked Marko Pausanian as he sat down again on the sand.

‘You had better sail across in the morning,’ said Spiridion, and lolled back against a smooth slope of jutting rock, and

with a wave of the hand appeared to regard the matter as comfortably shifted from that moment to other shoulders.

Some hours later, yet while it was still moonlight, Marko Pausanian went down to the edge of the sea and began making ready a small sailing-cutter which he was in the habit of handling by himself.

He did not notice, until it was close upon him, a figure which had emerged from one of the huts and come with a soft, graceful tread across the sand.

He swung round with a hasty oath as a shadow loomed at his side, and then he saw who it was.

‘Nara . . .’ he said. ‘What are you doing here?’

‘Are you going for a sail?’ asked the girl, stepping close to him.

‘Over to Corfu. You ought to be still asleep.’

‘The moon is far too bright,’ she answered evasively. ‘How long will you be away from us . . . this time?’

He laughed lightly.

‘Why, do you miss me, Nara, when I am away?’ he asked.

‘We women miss any of you who are away,’ she said, though she knew, for her part, that she lied. ‘It is a dull life cooped here,’ she added, and he could see in the moonlight the discontented pout on her lips.

‘Yet you are freer than most women in Venice and the coast-towns,’ he asserted.

‘Freer to be alone,’ she answered. ‘Madams of Venice and the coast-towns may grow weary of festals and gossip, but we, who have no festals and nothing to gossip over, find even a yawn an event. Besides, we quarrel among ourselves—with nothing to quarrel about except making use of another’s broom or pitcher, or oversleeping too long in the morning, or as to whose turn it is to watch

the goats. Take me across to Corfu with you, Marko, and I can go marketing.'

He shook his head.

'Not to-day, Nara,' he answered. 'I have more to do in Corfu this time than take a girl over to go marketing.'  
'It's always so,' she said petulantly. 'When will you be back? At night?'

'I do not know,' he replied, and gazed silently out across the intervening sea between himself—and what? She studied him briefly, hesitated, parted her lips to speak, thought better of her intention, and turned and ran swiftly back to her hut without word or gesture of farewell.

He came to himself abruptly out of his dreaming, and stared after her. He had grown up with Nara Paramythioti, and was fond of her in a lazy, fraternal way, but was beginning to see that he meant more to her than a brother, and he was not quite happy in the knowledge. He knew, moreover, with a sigh of discontent, that his great-uncle not only favoured, but expected, the match. His face, had any been there to note it, betrayed a sudden curious fierceness, a kind of renewed strength of purpose. Then he turned his attention once more to the cutter, and presently put off.

He was already a mile or so from the Albanian coast, with a good breeze directly behind, when the first limpid rosiness of the swift dawn began in the summer sky.

At Corfu he was successful in his mission, for when the Captain of the Gulf finally put to sea in battle trim against the pirates, Marko Pausanian, with various other recruits, was in the Captain's own ship.

Conrazzo's first exploit owed perhaps something to luck, for he caught two pirate vessels, belonging to one of Spiridion's associates, in the very act of attacking a Genoese

merchantman off the eastern coast of Santa Maura. He prevented the capture of the merchantman, and sank one of the pirates' vessels in the process. The other limped off towards Missolonghi.

From then onwards, without pause or truce, ensued a bitter and relentless struggle as exasperating to the one side as to the other, and with no quarter given : if one of the Venetians or their mercenaries fell into the hands of the pirates, his throat was cut immediately ; and if one of the pirates fell into the hands of the Captain of the Gulf, he was at once hanged.

Marko Pausanian, making use of his great-uncle's many rascally agents along the coasts and in the islands, slipped back to him what news he was able of Conrazzo's swoopings in the Adriatic, Ionian and Ægean seas. But not always was he successful in preventing a disaster ; it sometimes happened that news which he sent, and which caused, perhaps, some pirate vessel to make for a particular anchorage for safety, would be discounted by a sudden change of plan in the Captain's wily brain—for he was proving a very subtle enemy indeed !—and then the vessel would be caught and destroyed.

For fleeting terms he would obtain leave, and make for the cove, and would there add his own swift counsel for the discomfiture of their merciless foe into the common pool of discussion between Spiridion and his friends and associates. The pirates, whose nerve-centre was the Gulf of Corinth, were practically a confederacy, with affiliations extending from the higher Dalmatian coast to the shores of Asia Minor, and Spiridion was its leading spirit and, in effect, a kind of Grand Admiral of piracy, and to him all the cut-throats of those seas gave an almost feudal obedience.

'I think we will make a change in these matters,' announced

Spiridion at one such meeting. 'Marko Pausanian shall go back to his "duty" as before, but instead of reporting where this Conrazzo is planning to attack *us*, let him report where he will be at cruise, time, place, strength and so forth, for us to attack *him*. If we gather a full fleet among us—and what more possible?—we may end this Captain's little career for him at a blow.'

It was so agreed, and Marko Pausanian returned to the Captain of the Gulf's headquarters in the great Venetian citadel at Corfu. But before he set sail again for that island Nara came flying down from the rocky terrace where she had been tending the colony's goats. Spiridion and her father, smiling and winking the one to the other as they moved away, left them alone on the shore. It was noon, and the sea choppy, and the wind was blowing her dark hair, usually like an ebon aureole about her face, as though it were a sudden tangle of black flames.

'You come so secretly,' she panted, 'and go so soon when you come, Marko. We seem never to talk now as we used.'

'I have so much to do these days,' he answered. 'We are fighting for our existence, and have to meet cunning with cunning—and speed with speed.'

'You are going now? To Corfu again?'

'At once—and to Corfu. I'm going back to the Captain of the Gulf's Venetian galley. I'm . . . useful there.'

'I believe there's a Corfiote girl,' she said, and smiled, with a woman's natural dissimulation, as if she were mocking him instead of sounding his heart.

'No, there is no girl for me in Corfu,' he answered harshly, then tried to turn aside his harshness by a laugh. But she was not as deceived as he had hoped, even though she was mistaken at that time in her intuition.

‘You are strange in soul, Marko. I see that,’ she said quietly. ‘But not from love,’ she added. Motionless, she watched him run down his boat into the water and sail rapidly away before the wind. When, from a little distance out, he waved his hand, she made no response ; nevertheless, she stood at the sea’s edge and strained her sight after him till he could be seen no more.

He returned unexpectedly soon, for barely a week had gone by when his cutter slipped back into the cove at night.

‘We have him !’ he reported eagerly, and told of a galliass bearing silks from Aleppo, which galliass Conrazzo had instructions to pick up off Cephalonia and escort through the Adriatic, for the *Dogaressa*, it was whispered, had an interest in her cargo.

He named a rock-browed Cephalonian inlet with deep water.

‘We can assemble there, and lie snug,’ he suggested, ‘and leap out at his throat as he passes. Even with no wind, our sweeps are swifter than his.’

The inlet was known to them all, being one of their customary lurking places, and the plan gained instant approval. A dozen piratical craft of varying sizes, but each strongly armed, were collected, and Marko Pausanian, tired, as he complained, of acting the spy, was given the command of one of them.

They sailed at night for greater secrecy, proposing to reach the Cephalonian coast a little before dawn. The galliass from Aleppo was expected to move by and be met by Conrazzo about the middle morning, and there would be ample time, thought the pirate leaders gleefully, to prepare their surprise. The tactical idea was to move out from the inlet in the shape of an opening fan, the swifter ships at the two ends, so as to spread right and left and then close



in upon the enemy from his two lines of retreat, while the centre of the fan, the handle, as it were, composed of the more heavily armed vessels, should swing on in direct attack.

But it never came to the execution of so excellent a plan, for, rounding into the inlet with muffled sweeps under a sky of intense stars, they were met by a merciless raking from Conrazzo's five ships, anchored inside in a half-circle, and from shore batteries cunningly planted amid the rocks. It was a veritable sea-ambush, with the whole scene flaringly lit by the throwing of Greek fire.

The pirates, who had eight boats, fared cruelly. Two were sunk almost at once, and the other six put about to sea with heavy loss, and with the Captain of the Gulf in alert pursuit through the dawn. In the running action that followed, another pirate vessel was sunk, and a fourth forced on the rocks to utter disruption ; a fifth was boarded in mid-sea and captured, and only three limped back, crippled in spars and sweeps and reeking like shambles, to the cove in Albania.

That day there was much weeping and despair in the huts.

'Where is Marko?' asked a wild-eyed Nara of her father, who had a bloody slash across his face, taken when an attempt to board his vessel had been repulsed.

It was Spiridion who answered :

'He was in the galley they took.'

For all his long life of bloodstained crime, the old pirate was moved to horror. But it was a selfish horror. He had no such feeling about the others taken in the same galley and doomed presumably to the same certain fate.

Nara turned away in silence and kept aloof for some days, generally volunteering to tend the goats on the cliff terraces ; but it was noticeable that she did not wail or beat the breast

as the other women, and it moved her father to make comment upon it. To him, it seemed unnatural that a girl whose lover had met with Marko Pausanian's only too probable end should not be distraught and a nuisance to all philosophical men-folk. Her pale quietude, because he did not understand it, worried him to irritation. But her reply made him smile sadly and pat her shoulder in superior affection.

'He will come back,' she had answered. 'He is not dead ; he will be coming back. You will see.'

And she returned to her goats dry-eyed and rather fiercely proud in her foolish contention. She was distraught after all, decided Paramythioti, and it had sent her a little mad.

But she was not mad, and her contention was not foolish, for Marko Pausanian did return, crawling up the sand, exhausted after swimming in from a boat that had capsized over a mile off the shore, hungry and in much physical distress.

When he was in fit trim to give an account of his adventures he related that he had pretended on capture to be himself a captive in the pirate galley and that the sudden fight had been his rescue from a slit throat. His tale had been believed, he said. But now he had deserted to bring information vital to the whole colony's safety, for the Captain of the Gulf was preparing a descent upon the Albanian coast-line, and was minded to search every possible secret anchorage.

'Who is it so constantly betrays us ?' muttered Spiridion, his hands at his beard in their customary action.

Marko Pausanian shrugged his shoulders.

'Some prisoner of us may have saved his damned neck,' he said, 'or one of your coast spies has gone a-fishing and caught—sequins.'

‘What’s to do?’ asked the practical and laconic Paramythioti.

‘Fight it out here,’ growled Spiridion. ‘We can rig up culverins on shore as well as he, and this cove can be made impregnable. The women and children can be sent to villages in the hills.’

Then he curséd Conrazzo and his whole race to the tenth generation before and after.

‘Why must he come meddling?’ he cried violently. ‘He has laid my best friends by the heels, and crippled *me*. By the Seven Virgins of Cattaro, he seems to read my own secret brain. Is he a necromancer? He knows what I’m about verily before I do it. It is not often that sea-thieves come to starvation, but we are like to—unless . . .’ and he shook a fist in the direction of Corfu, and again cursed the Captain of the Gulf and his whole race to the tenth generation before and after.

They laid their immediate plans, after which Marko Pausanian, at a hint from his great-uncle which he could not ignore, climbed the cliff terraces in search of Nara.

These terraces, sloping seaward, were sometimes cultivated, sometimes bare; principally they were olive orchards or fields of violets; and the hedges were formed of twining cacti. In a breeze the swaying heads of the cacti had the appearance of wavering snakes, which made the zigzag paths up and through the terraces ways to be avoided at night by the imaginative and timorous. It was in one of the fields of olive trees that he found her, seated on a low, contorted branch, and looking dreamily out over the sea.

‘I knew you would come safe back,’ she said, without turning her face to him or giving him any greeting.

He flung himself down on the thin grass under her tree. Leaning on his arm, he looked smilingly up at her.

‘I don’t believe you wept for me at all, Nara,’ he teased her, half in amusement, half in pique.

‘I didn’t weep for you, Marko, because there was no need. You weren’t dead. I knew you weren’t dead.’

Her calm, level voice turned him cold with a kind of spiritual fear. A careless believer rather than an unbeliever, he felt suddenly abashed in the presence of a soul that had been so ultimately aware of truth that she had not faltered in her intuitive confidence. She took on the instant a new aspect for him ; he began to study her more assessingly than he had ever taken the trouble to do before. He grew strangely and incredibly humble as he looked at her.

He saw a clear-cut, brown face under a sun-faded yellow kerchief adorned with a fringe of gold coins. She wore a loose, white Greek blouse and a skirt of blue and red striped barracan ; her legs were stockingless, but she had a pair of embroidered Turkish slippers upon her feet, and clasping each arm was a broad gold bracelet. But he had seen that picture of her a thousand times, and it barely entered his consciousness again ; it was her face which he saw newly—for there was that written upon it now which he had never scanned before.

She was not beautiful, for her features were irregular, and her nose a little too long, though it was shapely enough and delicately nostrilled. Her eyes were black and her brows straight and dark, and the hair under her coined kerchief as black as her eyes, but somewhat coarse in texture. But her ears were beautiful, and her lips : the former small and finely shaped, the latter sinuously seductive over gleaming and regular teeth. It was not a chiselled mouth, but one rather hastily modelled—yet modelled in rose-leaves and fire. Her expression, usually stilled in a natural self-containedness, was now, while equally self-contained, less

stilled, more enigmatic, and he found his mind endeavouring to explore this subtle change of inward mood with surprising interest.

‘Would you have wept for me,’ he asked idly, almost as though for something to say, ‘had it been true?’

She shook her head. But suddenly a tear formed like a pearl and dropped down her cheek.

‘Yet you weep at my return!’ he said, a little brusquely.

‘O Marko . . .’ she cried, and hid her face in her hands, and was bewilderingly shaken with great, nervous sobs.

He rose to his feet and put his arm about her. He had often put his arm about her; it was a brotherly act, not a lover’s. She neither stirred in his hold, nor repulsed him.

‘Not weep—and then weep!’ he said. ‘Should I feel flattered, Nara, or hurt?’ he asked, half whimsically.

‘Don’t speak to me, don’t speak to me . . .’ she repeated over and over again between her sobbings, whereupon he just silently held her within his arm till the paroxysm had ceased. His meditation the while was not single, but divided; as the Virgilian hero, he was revolving many things in his mind. But gradually he became permeated with an intrusive feeling quite alien to the tenor of his other preoccupations, something that so overwhelmingly astonished him as to cause the former current of his thoughts to run first awry, and then to cease flowing, the whole trend of his inner being turning suddenly into a freshly channelled course, as will a river after a terrene upheaval.

The ignition of passion is a curious thing: there are so many methods in its operation. It can happen at first sight, as with the lovers of Verona; but it can also grow subconsciously, to blossom into fire after long and seemingly innocuous proximity and so with complete unexpectedness. Thus was it with Marko Pausanian. He had held Nara

Paramythioti in the embrace of his arm many a time, from their childhood on, yet it was now for the first time that it began to give him a thrill ; he had admired the curving grace of her brown cheek, had even kissed it playfully and without meaning, but never until now had the chance of kissing it seemed an adventure ; he had even watched her lips in the attractive play of their southern speech, but it was only now that he felt an impulse to touch them with his own in desire and not as an act or habit of greeting.

To translate a dream into action is the work of a man, and Marko Pausanian lifted her face with his free hand and bent his lips to hers. She received his kiss passively, as though such sympathy from him was a natural thing, but as his kiss deepened in intensity her closed eyes opened, and she strained against him and held abruptly away, to meet his own eyes with a gaze unfathomable, half question, half indictment.

‘What is it, Nara ?’ he asked, and passion had hoarsened his voice. ‘Can’t a man tell a girl when he loves her ?’

‘Loves ? . . .’ she breathed, and it was less an interrogation than a sigh.

He caught her to him again, this time roughly and dominantly.

She let herself be prisoned, and in both of his arms now ; she let herself be kissed as he had never kissed her—or any other woman—before. But she kept her eyes close shut, either from the fear to read the script in his, or from an equal fear to have him read the script in hers, perhaps from both fears intermingled : for that is the way of love’s expression and evasion alike.

‘I love you,’ he whispered. ‘Why did I never know I loved you till now ? I have all my lost chances to remedy !’ And he laughed happily.

She made no answer, and he repeated over and over again : ' I love you, Nara, I love you ! '

Then she opened her eyes and asked one question :

' And Maddalena Foscari ? '

In the sudden loosening of his grasp she slipped down from the olive bough on which she had been sitting, and then stood and faced him.

' And Maddalena Foscari ? ' she repeated.

He brushed a hand across his eyes as though to clear them of a film.

' Did you think I never knew ? ' she asked.

' My uncle didn't ! ' he replied sullenly.

There fell a pause while they looked at one another. Then she slowly nodded her head as if she were a judge who had come to a sudden decision in a debatable passing of sentence.

' I—have—known—everything,' she said with a deliberate stress upon each word.

His whole countenance abruptly narrowed in concentration, until his cheek-bones seemed to stand more starkly in his face than was normal, and his lips became a grim line.

' What do you mean ? ' he asked, and forced himself to a laugh. ' What is there to know ? That . . . I found . . . a captive once good to look upon and that my uncle . . . killed her ? ' He could hardly finish his utterance, and was deathly pale.

She shook her head, and replied :

' That which you consider the deepest secret of your heart is the thing I mean, Marko. I will not speak it.'

He caught one of her hands and pulled her towards him.

' I think you had better speak it,' he whispered, and his face was dark above hers.

Her eyes blazed.

‘Two words will answer,’ she said.

‘What two words?’

‘Revenge; spy!’

He loosed her hand and moved back a step, leant his right shoulder against the olive bough on which she had lately been sitting, and folded his arms, half lazily.

‘Well?’ he demanded. ‘Two words say nothing.’

‘You are befooled by Fate—if you have fallen to loving me,’ she answered, bitterly satirical. ‘To be taking revenges—and suddenly in the midst of it to lose the crying urge for revenge! O Marko! . . .’

She had paused at the look in his eyes, at the clenching of his hands, at the heaving of his breast.

‘Nara, Nara,’ he muttered, ‘I have ploughed a deep furrow and planted blood, but blood cried for it—and she was the first star in my sky.’

She had no answer to that, and he went on:

‘Night and day her lovely slashed throat has been my torment—and my spur. I regret nothing. What service I have given my murdered darling has been from a new awakening: this pirate life ever was vile, but I did not know it till it touched me so nearly. It turned my brain into ice to think of her in our clutches, and if a brain so touched is madness, why, then, I think I have been mad—or become saner than I was bred!’ he added passionately.

‘An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,’ she murmured, and her gaze was deep, hard and level.

‘By Heaven,’ he burst out, ‘am I a stone? Is a man never to have a change of heart? If I was bred pirate, am I to remain pirate without remission? Cannot I, too, hold to law and order and learn to prize it against licence and theft and murder?’

‘You could have left us—and never come back.’



‘And had no easing of my pain ! All my life long to have remembered in myself such cowardly meekness as would shame even an old monk ! And I young and a man, with the woman I loved . . . murdered ! Wince if you will, Nara, but that I love *you* now does not mean that I did not love *her* then.’

‘It was then that I winced, Marko,’ she answered simply, ‘not now.’

‘And now ?’ he asked swiftly.

‘I can forgive revenge,’ she said slowly, ‘but I hate a spy.’

‘A spy ?’ he repeated, and stood open-mouthed.

‘Your dark journeys over to Corfu,’ she accused him, with a jingling lift of her head, ‘were less to bring news of this Captain of the Gulf than to take it him. We all know, your uncle, my father, every one of us, that someone betrayed us time after time : the agents on the coasts are suspected, but it was really you, Marko—and I know it.’

‘This Captain of the Gulf . . .’ he said, and paused, and his eyes and his lips were alike smiling.

‘He, at least, is an honest fighter,’ she cried, ‘and a leader of men. He can be proud of his deeds—but can you ?’

‘I believe you admire Conrazzo,’ he said, still smiling.

‘Marko,’ she answered seriously, ‘do not think that I, any more than you, like this piracy, this wild life we live, our bloodstained money. But we were brought up to think it the only life and way of life, and have had to grow our hatred of it as though it were a tender plant within ourselves, and to foster it in secret that one day it might blossom—if it could. But it should have blossomed with better fruit than a spy’s murky betraying.’

‘Nara . . .’ he began, his smile dying out in a pucker. He was neither angry nor repentant ; but seemed the prey

of a curious and puzzling self-mockery. He did not finish his expostulation, but stared out over the beauty of the sea, momentarily aloof.

‘Had you . . . loved me earlier,’ she went on, hesitant and yet proudly honest in the same breath, ‘we might have fled together to a new life. You might have served Venice at sea, and become—who knows?—one of her great sailors and admirals—fighting in honour, not in shame.’

He tore his gaze away from the sea.

‘Have been, in fact, a . . . Conrazzo,’ he flashed back in reply, and his voice seemed to rasp with a jealous scorn.

‘Why not?’ she answered, giving him a candid look.

He was smiling again.

‘And put down piracy?’ he asked.

Was he mocking her? She thought that he was, and she was moved to retort angrily :

‘It is better to put it down than to betray it!’

‘Even a Conrazzo must gain information.’

‘Does he pay well?’ she asked instantly.

‘He has paid . . . *me* . . . nothing,’ he answered, and his tone was such that she believed him without question, though in naïve surprise.

They stood gazing at one another for a full minute.

‘Are you not afraid?’ she asked suddenly.

‘Afraid? Why?’

‘That I might tell my father the truth.’

He pulled her to him, laughing, and kissed her hotly.

‘No, Nara,’ he cried. ‘You love me—and would only betray me if I did not do thus and thus and thus . . .’ and he kissed her again at each repetition.

She pushed him away at last with both her hands pressed against his bosom, denying her lips, and looking into his face with a kind of beseeching impassivity.

‘Tell me,’ she demanded levelly, and scorning to wheedle him, ‘what is this talk of the Captain searching this coast and a plan to fight him in the cove? Do you tell me that it is an honest news you brought? Or that the fighting him here will do anything but put us hopelessly into his clutches? Is not this fight to be the *last* fight—one to give you all your revenge in full? Can you deny this, Marko?’

‘How did you guess these things?’ he asked, and his question was admission enough.

‘There is little in you that I do not know,’ she answered, and though she smiled as she spoke, it was a sober little smile, and half satirical, too. ‘Perhaps it is the woman in me, Marko,’ she added, and was at once grave again, and unsatirical, and proud.

‘Yet there’s something in me you do not know,’ he said, and stood smiling at her.

‘Not in *you*, Marko,’ she replied, ‘but only, maybe, in your outer life—in Venice or in Corfu.’

‘Yes,’ he said, nodding, ‘in Venice and Corfu.’ And he continued smiling.

Suddenly tears began gathering again in her eyes, and with a forlorn gesture she turned away towards the zigzag path that led down the terraces to the sea.

He followed swiftly, and caught her by the sleeve.

‘We have stood, and spoken—and nothing more,’ he cried. ‘What has my speaking, or yours, brought to a term and settled? Nothing. And we must not go down to them without . . . something settled. You have called me a spy, and I have told you I love you. Come, I will give up my spying if you will go with me. We can go to-night. We can cross to Corfu in my boat. I will carve out a future for us—and one that a woman can share without being ashamed or a fugitive. There is my promise, Nara.’

‘And your revenge, Marko?’

His face hardened and lost some of the exaltation that it had had.

‘It is my eleventh hour,’ he muttered. ‘My eleventh hour, Nara. Don’t they deserve their last quelling?’

‘One of them is my father. If through your betrayal he is killed,’ she asked in a steady voice, ‘should not I have as much cause for revenge as you have? I could not go with you anywhere in such a case—nor would you be safe with me if I did! I am a fierce man’s daughter, and his blood is not milk in my veins. But . . .’

‘I understand,’ he said after a pause. ‘To win one joy I must forgo another.’

‘You must measure your joy in *me*,’ she answered, and her smile was a sudden glory that dazzled.

‘I will not undo what I have done,’ he said stubbornly.

‘No man can undo what he has done—when he has done it in the wrath of his soul,’ she replied. Then, immediately, she asked: ‘Tell me, Marko—these preparations against Conrazzo’s attack from the sea which you have persuaded your uncle to make are really a playing into Conrazzo’s own hands? You need not answer. I can see it is true. The attack will come from land—a surprise in the rear. I see. You are very clever, Marko, in such matters. You should lead men—not betray them!’

He opened his mouth to speak, then seemed as in a flash to have reconsidered his intention. He said nothing. And she went on:

‘Let Conrazzo hear that his surprise will fail; he will then draw off. After this let your uncle and my father fend as they will in open war—and I will go with you to find a new life. But see them betrayed to butchery, no, Marko, I can never do that.’

He surprised her by the reply he made : it was a hearty laugh.

‘As you will,’ he said. ‘We will slip across to Corfu to-night, and I will deliver such news to the Captain of the Gulf as will change his plans. Will you come—and be secret?’

She looked deeply into his eyes, then deliberately gave him both of her hands, after which she abruptly drew them from his grasp and ran down the zigzag terraces as sure-footed as one of her goats.

He did not follow at once, but stood in that olive orchard for a long time, at first thinking rather than dreaming, and then dreaming rather than thinking.

The night came cloudily over a sea beginning to tumble upon the shore. After the day’s heat it was cold, with a wind turning sharp. Nara crept down towards the breaking waves wrapped in a sheepskin cloak to find Marko Pausanian impatient beside his cutter.

He took the bundle which she carried and laid it in the boat, then turned to lift her over the side. It was so dark that they could barely see one another ; the running foam at their feet seemed the only guide to their movements, a kind of blear illumination as from some ghostly lamp that was continually being withdrawn.

‘Are you ready?’ he asked, and gripped her under the armpits. ‘Put your foot on my knee.’

She was in the cutter almost before she knew, and it was run out into the sea, and he was scrambling aboard and at work with the sail in what seemed an instant. But to him all was as irritatingly slow as to her it had been feverishly swift. Not that he feared pursuit—who would suspect anything but a fishing expedition such as he and Nara Paramythioti had taken numberless times together?—but

he feared his own change of heart, his own purpose. The less delay, the more likely his keeping faith. And he wanted to keep faith. But to Nara or . . . to the spectre of Maddalena ?

The sea was not really heavy, and they made good progress through the dark, for he was a skilful sailor. They approached Corfu in the early light, slipped in behind the islet of Volo, and ran on to a small quay beneath the long, grey, yet florid, ramparts of the Venetian castle.

The quay was deserted save for a few fishermen, gossiping in the sun. Marko Pausanian tied up, helped Nara ashore, and taking her arm, bent his steps towards a paved way that led up and up to the castle's frowning gate. The fishermen paused in their gossip as they passed by. But Marko Pausanian took no notice of them ; they took no notice of him. Nara, however, felt a curious discomfort as she received, only too tangibly, their glances upon her back.

She had landed with Marko at the same place and in the same way many a time, but had never experienced any similar discomfort of soul. Was it that Marko's spying had become generally known, and that he was distrusted and hated, and that she was now tarred with the same obloquy ?

At the gate was a poor ass, heavily laden with carpets from Asia Minor, and a chaffering Levantine, its master, half Greek, half Anatolian, gesticulated in the face of the corseleted, morioned sentry who was good-humouredly threatening him with his pike.

'We want nothing,' the sentry was saying, 'neither your wares, nor your ass—nor you either.'

'But the Captain—let me but see the Captain—and one sight of my beautiful carpets—let me but see the great Captain of the Gulf—or his lieutenant—or his body-servant—or——'

‘Neither his cook nor his go-between!’ replied the sentry. ‘Be off!’

At that moment he became aware of the approach of Marko Pausanian and Nara, and stiffened where he stood.

· (‘Another who despises us,’ thought Nara, beginning to feel utterly forlorn.)

Marko Pausanian went up to the sentry and whispered in his ear, then he turned and beckoned Nara to follow him. They were permitted to enter, and passed on along a cobbled incline between high, machicolated walls towards an inner gate, the lofty, battlemented top of which caught the sun, seeming as though washed in a liquid brightness.

There were loungers in the gateway, men-at-arms in leather jerkins and uncorseleted, pages and menials, laughing and gossiping. They turned silent and uncomfortable at the sight of Marko Pausanian, and again Nara’s heart was sickly ashamed. Through a lane made for them they entered a small courtyard, and out of the courtyard passed on under a low, Saracenic arch into a high-walled cloister with a grim turret at either corner. One of the pages had followed at their heels.

‘Wait here, Nara,’ whispered Marko Pausanian. ‘I must first see the Captain and undo what I can. Stay here with Gaetano.’

He pressed her arm encouragingly, and left her, disappearing through a dark, narrow, tunnel-like passage leading into the heart of the fortress.

The page tried to make conversation. He was very polite, and tried obviously to show how accomplished he was in the lighter ways of chivalry; but Nara hardly heard him, hardly, indeed, knew that he was speaking. She had never felt so disconsolate in her life. Her heart was beating

irregularly, and her eyes began pricking with half-shed, hoarded tears. Then, in the midst of a story about a fantastic dream, with yet an inner meaning which it took a poet such as, by implication, himself to elucidate, there came another page, who, after a pettishly scornful glance at his fellow, bowed to Nara and begged that she would be pleased to follow him.

She was taken along bare, stern passages, up a winding stairway of stone, into an antechamber overlooking the sea. Her conductor scratched on a small oaken door at the farther end, an indistinguishable voice made answer, the page opened the door, then stood aside with a bow for Nara to enter, and the door was closed softly behind her when she had passed in. She found herself in a sunlit chamber open to a long balcony, beyond which she could see the Albanian coast in the distance, with golden mountains rising above. The intervening sea was an intense blue, flecked with rippling white, and white clouds scudded across a heaven that was of a blue almost equally intense. The chamber itself, except for a long refectory table littered with papers, and with a gilded chair thrust a little away from it as though its late occupant had risen hastily, was empty ; but she could see the figure of a man standing on the balcony with his back to her, gazing out over the sea.

She had expected to find Marko there, and was suddenly afraid. What had they done with him ? Had his refusal to be their spy any longer been his doom ? She guessed that the figure on the balcony was the redoubtable Conrazzo, the Captain of the Gulf. She saw that he was in armour, with a red cloak over his shoulders, and upon his head a morion of bright steel which flashed in the morning.

The figure turned and stepped into the room, and at once, with a missed beat of her heart that brought a hand to her



side, she knew how utterly mistaken she had been, how blind and unimaginative.

‘Marko!’ she whispered.

‘Even I,’ he answered, and wondered within himself why he could not smile. The surprise seemed, somehow, without savour, without the anticipated romance, the expected thrill. It was a dull moment, not a bright, a pause in life instead of a pace onward.

He went moodily to the table, and stood fingering the papers and scrolls that were upon it.

‘I have a secretary who can read,’ he said suddenly, and looked at her, and gave a half-whimsical, half-bitter laugh. ‘But I wonder how much he reads while I am away . . . spying! He is fat and lazy—and a priest. I have sent for him. If you were willing to marry a spy, you will not refuse—will you?—to marry an officer of Venice.’

She could see nothing clearly: golden mountains, bright blue sea, sunlight, swift clouds, red cloak and shining morion, everything, seemed as though tarnished and imprecise, dulled, fluid and without edge or line in a swimming dream.

‘Well?’ he asked, a little sharply, for her silence was puzzling him—or, rather, manlike, he was misinterpreting it.

Before she could answer, the secretary-priest, without knocking, entered and stood a few paces within the room, his hands folded before him. He was a burly man, with a rubicund face and no particularly benign expression, unless a smirk can be a benediction.

‘All is ready, Excellency,’ he announced in a mellow voice. Its unexpected beauty came, in its surprisingness, like a stone cast into her trance and shattered it. Everything at once was again real and vivid.

Marko Pausanian nodded to the priest, and crossed to her side and took her hand.

‘Come,’ he said, as though contemptuous and impatient of any need for persuasion.

He was right : it was not persuasion she needed, it was self-justification. But the heart is the greatest of sophists. She let him lead her whither he willed, and presently, in the chapel of the fortress, they were made man and wife.

Immediately afterwards the Captain of the Gulf was immersed in business.

As Nara, from a cushioned corner of the balcony, heard her husband’s voice speaking with decisiveness and in authority, her wonder and amazement grew and took firmer shape. Yet it all seemed like a persisting dream. At times, recollecting the old Marko whom she thought she had known so well, she was amused, and smiled, though why she smiled and was amused she would have found it difficult to tell. She was in the midst of one of these long, slow smiles, with the hand that wore her bright new wedding-ring pressed softly against her cheek, when abruptly he came out to her.

He threw a tasselled silk purse chinkingly into her lap.

‘You will be dull, wife,’ he said, laughing, ‘with naught to do but listen to the mumbling of our business in there. Go out into Corfu—and buy clothes. You are Conrazzo’s lady : set off your beauty with the best fine raiment to be bought here. Later, in Venice . . .’

He did not proceed with his promises, but stood over her, still laughing, but there was pride behind his laughter—that kind of pride which is abetted in its behaviours by ambition.

He pulled her from the cushions by both her hands, and led her through to the antechamber, his council of sea-officers rising and bowing at her passage, and there, with a swift kiss, he left her and returned to his conference.

She found her way to the outer gate, and was let through with smiles and salutes. The news of ‘Conrazzo’s’ marriage

had already spread through the garrison. She returned the greetings with shy smiles of her own ; no longer did she feel a despised pariah. Life was good, after all. She began singing under her breath an Albanian love-song as she walked down the long, walled incline to the quay below.

On the quay, jabbering to a group of fishermen, was the carpet-seller.

The ass stood wearily a yard or so in front of its master. Still singing, she paused a bare half-minute to stroke its nose as she passed by, making for the narrow streets of the town. She had scarcely glanced at either the fishermen or the carpet-seller, and was only subconsciously aware of their presence upon her way. But she had hardly left the quayside to strike into Corfu itself when she heard a hoarse voice calling after her—calling her, strangely, by her name, or by what had been her name until that very morning, almost that very hour.

‘Nara—Nara Paramythioti !’

She looked back. It was the carpet-seller. He was hurrying after her, pulling the ass cruelly along by the outstretched reins.

She turned and waited for him, partly from curiosity and partly because to do anything else might fix unnecessary attention upon her, and as ‘Conrazzo’s’ wife she must begin to use a due circumspection in public.

He came up to her, pretending to be out of breath.

‘You won’t know me, Nara Paramythioti,’ he wheezed, ‘but your father an’ me, we are old friends—an’ my son served in his galley. He was killed,’ he added fiercely, ‘in that sea-ambush off Cephalonia when the Captain caught ’em unawares. I have no other son. Cursed be Conrazzo !’

He spat, then gave her a keen glance from under his bushy brows.

‘I saw you go in’—and he jerked his head in the direction of the castle—‘with young Marko Pausanian. What is young Marko Pausanian doing in there? Shall I tell you? He is supposed to be spying. *Supposed* to be, I said.’

He tapped his nose with a large, dirty forefinger, and Nara began to go cold.

‘A fine spy—always wrong in his news!’ went on the carpet-seller, leering. ‘I’m one o’ Spiridion’s coast watchers, d’ye see? An’ I know. Does he take his uncle for a fool? Spiridion’s no fool, Nara Paramythioti, an’ has looked for the traitor this month or more. And what a traitor! No, Spiridion be no fool. He set a spy on the spy—he set *me* on the heels o’ his nephew. On’y last week he did so. D’ye see? An’ now I know. I says, now I know, Nara Paramythioti, an’ you came over with him this very morning, an’ he be two men in one—d’ye see?—Marko Pausanian, the false spy o’ his uncle, an’ Conrazzo, Captain o’ the Gulf, on whom—he, he, he!—he ha’ been spying—or should a poor old carpet-seller say “*for* whom he ha’ been spying”? Is it too hard a riddle, Nara Paramythioti? I think not. No, by God, I think not!’

She stared at him speechlessly. So all was out! Thank the Virgin, she thought, he is over here and not in the cove. Here he is safe, but there . . . She shivered as she imagined his great-uncle’s and her father’s possible ways of punishment and vengeance.

‘The Captain’s *next* attack,’ went on the carpet-seller, ‘will not come off so well, Nara Paramythioti. Your father will ha’ surer news than that your fancy youth will ha’ sent over, d’ye see? From now on,’ he continued, again tapping his nose and leering, ‘his double game be finished—an’ his cock’s spurs are blunt.’

He shook a fist towards the castle, leered at her once more,

and then, pulling his overladen ass cursingly after him, left her where she stood and trudged on into the irregular byways of the poorer part of the town. At the same time a jangling carillon began from the tower of the nearest church.

Her desire for buying clothes was quenched ; her impulse was to turn back at once and warn Marko Pausanian—she could not think of him as yet as Conrazzo—against the carpet-seller. Then, suddenly, at a single thought, her despair vanished : things had become equalised ; Marko could continue as Conrazzo, with good chances of fame and fortune ; the carpet-seller could be let warn Spiridion ; and the battles against the pirates would be fought henceforward with clean hands and as any other naval warfare in the Adriatic and Ionian seas, with the luck depending upon skill and courage and not upon treachery. She began humming the Albanian love-song again, and pursued her way after all into the town to purchase gay stuffs and adornments.

She returned thrilled with her acquisitions, and in a clear-hearted, exultant mood. The Captain of the Gulf would advance from honour to honour and become in time one of Venice's most famous mercenaries, and she would be at his side, the queen of his glories.

They supped together alone, in a little, candle-lit, arrased chamber, and as they ate she told him about the carpet-seller. He thought as she did ; a stone rolled away from his heart, and he pledged her gaily :

‘ To the new life and the end of the old ! ’

They laughed, and exchanged dreams, and made love ; they mistook the world for a rehabilitated Eden. But they were young, and passionate, and happy.

He told her of how he had won over his council to a new plan of action, divulging—he had little known how truthfully !—that Spiridion had had wind of the proposed descent

on his Albanian headquarters and already had taken adequate precautions against surprise. All this supposedly as the result of his, Marko Pausanian's, own spying. The plan now was to play the fox rather than the lion, and to endeavour to lure Spiridion to sea by the use of false merchantmen, seemingly easy prey, but only decoys to lead him into a running battle far enough out from his base to have it fought ding-dong to a finish. That would be strategy against strategy, fair fighting—and without stabbing in the back.

She kissed him for very joy of honour regained within himself, and their night was without cloud. But the sea had begun to moan, and to lash at the rocks below ; and the sky by no means was without cloud—sullen, massive, moon-hiding cloud.

It was still stormy at morning, with a rising wind blowing down the Adriatic, cold from the northern snows. Nara, for all her happiness, shivered as she looked forth upon a coast iron and fanged. Soon during the day, however, she began to glow again, listening to the praises of her husband, whose daring, not only as leader but as secret penetrator into the enemy's lairs, was the theme of his officers' courtesy to her. There had never been a commander who had so adventurously combined the two parts, leader and spy together. His men worshipped him.

The Captain smiled when his wife repeated the more extravagant of their praises.

'They do not know everything,' he said. 'They do not know that I come myself from that nest of pirates—only that I had a friend there. They possibly now think that *you* were that friend ! All is well that is well believed, my Nara !'

She laughed up into his embrace.

At the edge of the harbour under the castle was a small shipyard, and there, like a fly caught in a web of scaffolding,

towered the curved framework of a new galley, for it was a period of intense Venetian shipbuilding against the growing menace of the Turks.

About noon the Captain of the Gulf went down to this yard to inspect the work in progress, and so far satisfied his wife's gay and almost childlike curiosity as to take her with him.

He was wearing neither morion nor cuirass, but only a sailor's boat-cloak over his embroidered jerkin, and a flat, dark blue, velvet cap on his head.

To Nara the scene was curiously eerie: the interlaced woodwork of the high scaffolding; the looming bulk of the hull, like a beast's belly; the noise of hammering; the sibilant, almost secretly mordant undercurrent of sawing; the sudden emergence of heads, shoulders or arms at unexpected places above her as the shipwrights moved about on their occasions. It was with difficulty that she refrained from shuddering openly, and she mocked at herself for a coward and a fool.

To ease her racing imagination she looked down to the sea, washing some few feet below and beside the shipyard. It was a kind of miniature bay, and the water was there comparatively calm. But, even outside, the sea was lessening now, the storminess having begun to subside about an hour ago. But it was still blowing off land.

Peering down, she saw a long, narrow boat, with three rowers, resting on their oars and looking up into the scaffolding. They were very still, very intent, and their faces were strained. Fishermen, thought Nara, who were pausing awhile, with puckered interest, to study the shape of the new galley. She smiled down at them, but they took no notice of her.

Then she looked round again. The Captain was standing

beside the unpainted, raw prow, with one hand upon it, talking to the Overseer. Suddenly, as though her eyes were compelled by something beyond volition, she looked up into the criss-cross mazes of that wooden web—to see a face staring intently down from an ambush of timber some few feet above the spot where Marko Pausanian was standing.

The expression in the carpet-seller's eyes told her everything as at a clap, and she shrieked out :

‘ Marko, take care ! ’

But it was too late. A long knife, flung with cool and desperate accuracy, gleamed snakelike down and struck straight to the heart.

‘ That for my son ! ’ cried the carpet-seller, and almost in the same instant, swinging from joist to joist of the scaffolding, he dropped into the waiting boat, the oars dipped at once and pulled strongly, swiftly, flashingly, and he was away seaward.

There was no vessel manned, no readiness for pursuit ; he had to be let escape.

Nara, kneeling at the side of the dying Marko Pausanian, was too distraught to know then what she knew—and taught her child to know—later : namely, that revenge, once entered upon, can no longer be controlled, and that its repercussion is often more oblique than direct.



## LADY WEMYSS.

APRIL 30, 1937.

*(A Personal Memoir.)*

BY PAMELA HINKSON.

IN the days immediately after her death, when memories of her had the clearness and radiance and simplicity that come at such a time, as if for a mercy and a benediction, it was not one person only that, writing or speaking of Lady Wemyss, used the word 'golden.' It was the word that came at once for my thoughts of her and of Stanway, the house that is literally golden, with its walls of deeply coloured Cotswold stone and the yellow-tinged glass in the windows, that suggests always a sun shining into them and a sun shining out of them.

That word for her describes more even than a colour of the spirit and mind. Hers was a golden world, a golden age in many senses. It is hard to touch or define in words the peculiar enchantment of the family to which she belonged, and the life about them which was of their making. None of the ordinary definitions of charm convey the Wyndham gifts. Brilliance of beauty, of intellect, of wit, of eternal youth, of appreciation of life—and what can only be described as a genius for living. A rich heritage of breeding and tradition and background, to which they gave back a service in proportion to the gifts given them. A consciousness of their heritage that was at once the simplest and proudest thing in the world. Someone said once that it was a beautiful sight to see the Wyndhams together, all so full of love

and admiration and delight in one another. Possibly the only indulgence they allowed themselves was that intense family love—a peculiarly delicate and beautiful and untroubled thing, as it could remain in such a life as theirs, where there is no crowding, no pressing of the small material cares, that in another life tend to take the gold away, however strong the steel of love that lies beneath.

Readers of the letters of their ancestor, Lord Edward Fitzgerald and his family, will find in them the same love and admiration of one Fitzgerald for another.

With that simple and perfectly humble awareness and recognition of their own gifts, there went the most complete and generous appreciation of the gifts and the traditions of others, however simple—not an aloof appreciation—it was part of their genius for friendship, that joy in their friends and their friends' lives. They were as anxious to enjoy you as they were that you should enjoy them. They were always interested, always ready to share, as they were ready to sympathise and help. This was as much a part of themselves as their love for each other and for their houses, Clouds<sup>1</sup>—Stanway,<sup>2</sup> which held their riches of living and loving. No family ever had such a gift for friendship as the Wyndhams and their descendants. Of this I am quite sure. There is something royal and magnificent in that way of giving out which I associate with them. It is in their wonderful letters and in their talk. That is the most splendid generosity of all, that gives recklessly of self, taking the risk which smaller, more cautious natures fear, since to give such friendship is to lose one's invulnerability, having given something

<sup>1</sup> Clouds, East Knoyle, built by Lady Wemyss' father, Mr. Percy Wyndham, in 1885.

<sup>2</sup> Stanway, Lord Wemyss' house in the Cotswolds and Lady Wemyss' home after her marriage.

of one's self, laying down one's defences against possible wound or hurt.

'I have no need in me except to help my friends, and to be fond of them and to assist their happiness . . .' George Wyndham once wrote to a friend, and he lived up to that. Because of that giving, that thought for a friend, a high noble consciousness of the sacred duties of friendship, they had and have a rarely developed sympathy. I think of a glance, a smile, a swift radiance sent across a room to catch your thought and prove the sharing of it. You had said nothing, but you were not alone. 'I know all about that . . .' written in a letter, was said also constantly without any words. As, at a meeting with Lady Wemyss, after a comparatively long period: 'I have often thought of you.' And that smile that told you, if you had not believed the words, that they were the simple truth. She had thought of you and of your life, and of your troubles and problems which she remembered among so many others as though she had had some neatly-ordered storing-place for such things. That was not possible, knowing her. The world of her sympathy must have been as crowded, and full of beautiful confusion, as the paper on which she wrote her letters with the many after-thoughts running round the edges of them. As each of these after-thoughts was important and lovely and trembling with sympathy—her writing indeed had a suggestion of wings—so, into the storing-place of her friends' experiences, which they had brought naturally to her, she could put her hand with unerring touch and find, among so many, the one she sought and that sought her. To be in trouble, and for her to be aware of it, was to turn in darkness and find suddenly a lighthouse, firm among dark stormy waters. A friend and fellow guest with her at the house of one of her daughters in recent years, saw that flame kindled.

It had been as though, in this, her loveliest age, she had come there to rest a little, leaving for a moment the myriad things she thought of for others every hour, at Stanway and elsewhere. (J. M. Barrie said of her that, like his mother, she went about always with her mouth full of nails—to hammer into walls that otherwise might have fallen.)

I have a picture of her, then, lying on a sofa, suffering from arthritis but never speaking of it—only the strange newer brightness of the pain in her face betraying it. Resting, she was still giving out, anxious to help a young writer by reading a book in typescript, by making suggestions, always apt and wise. Sometimes—or often—she dropped out one of the phrases that were peculiarly hers—the whole spirit of a story, told in as few as possible words. If one picked it up, and begged permission to use it, she smiled her consent, only glad if it was of any help. Discovering a real trouble and moment of crisis close to her, of which she had been unaware, it was as though she came back from a little peaceful distance into which she had drifted, because for the moment it seemed almost as if no one had need of her and took the sticks she used in her last years and which she made, by her use of them, only an added grace and beauty, and set out on her mission of aid. Almost, she took a lantern. I think she took many such lanterns in her life, going out into the storm and darkness of the world, like some royal saint or great abbess of old, to look for the hurt and the lost and hungry. One who twice saw that light spring up in her, remains blessed by the experience.

She wrote of her own mother, Mrs. Percy Wyndham, who was Lord Edward's grand-daughter :

‘ My mother had deep-set glowing eyes with dark eyebrows, thick eyelashes, and hair that grew low over her beautiful forehead. Her expression never lost its brilliance,

she never faded nor grew dim, nor did she ever fail her many friends in any way. Even as a child I remember noticing how the temperature of the whole house fell when she went away, even for a day. It was like the difference in winter time between a room with a cold and empty grate, or a lovely glowing fire; the whole house became happier, brighter, and better when she came home again. . . . My mother's taste in literature and art was her own, her friends followed her. Her delight in what was beautiful and good rejoiced their hearts, they seemed to feed from her hand and none went away empty. Juliet aptly describes my mother's nature when, leaning from her balcony, she says to Romeo: "My bounty is as boundless as the sea, my love as deep, the more I give to thee the more I have, for both are infinite . . ." Her bounty and love for all her friends was infinite. . . .

This might have been written of, and for, Lady Wemyss herself.

Of her, her own youngest daughter wrote, in that still moment when it seems as if the breath of the world were held, no sound, no dropping of a leaf disturbing the immortal golden hour, as though a spirit lingered on the way from one world to another:

'Of late years we seemed to look after and make plans for her—but always she kept us all going—and explained ourselves and each other and the world away. Nothing was an effort, yet everything soared and shone. . . . Now . . . just when you are falling over the precipice the tender smile comes to lift and bundle one along, as so often . . .'

One cannot separate her from her background. Into their love of England, the Wyndhams put an added richness and imagination because their blood was less purely English even than that of most of their class. Irish and French and Scottish mingled in them, with such varied gifts as must

almost, one feels at times, have struggled with each other for supremacy, and, making an even race at last, left a strength and energy of spirit—one, made of so many—that must sometimes have worn out the body that held it.

She had a way of telling you some small memory, recalling a ride, perhaps, that she had had with her brother, George, from Clouds over the Wiltshire Downs. She would remember the places to which they had ridden and repeat the English country names—Stockbridge, Nether Avon, Grovely Wood. Riding with family parties and with friends, or long walks at night from village to village, or to the top of a hill to see the sun rise, were favourite occupations of the Clouds and Stanway families. As was reading aloud, and discussing and enjoying a book to the full, afterwards. The hint, the picture, the feeling of joy conveyed in a memory, was not the mere recollection of an amusement and pleasure. These were part of their love for England. A memory of Clouds: 'Many a discussion on politics and other subjects between Papa, Sir Oliver Lodge, A. J. B., Hugo, Evan, Ego and others, while the gorse shed its fragrance and the larks sang,' is characteristic; and the comment: 'Those were happy days.' Another, of long Easter Monday drives to the steeplechases at Wincanton—in an old landau behind black horses bought when Mr. Wyndham was High Sheriff: 'I used to take the *Shropshire Lad* and read bits of it to him to help us on the way,' is revealing, too.

From a point near Stanway, Lady Wemyss looked down in April, 1930: 'on the fertile vale of Evesham and saw Housman's Bredon girt with the "many-coloured counties" and mothering a host of little hills.' She must have seen that view often before this time that she describes, when she saw it, 'in the full glory of Spring's fleeting beauty. The

foreground was decked with pinky-purple beech-buds, the larches wore their tender vivid green, and the emerald leaves of the horse-chestnut trees contrasted with the darkness of the yews. . . .’

In my last lovely memories of her, of which I shall write later, she said : ‘ We like the same country and the same books,’ adding that such similar tastes were a great bond in friendship. ‘ Speaking the same language ’ was another phrase of hers. It was so she chose her own friends—like all her family, knowing no narrow distinction of class or division between one world or another. Only a similarity of loyalties perhaps—not in the narrow sense. She was the widest person alive. But, to care for the same things, essentially. The only qualification for those, of all worlds, whom she enriched with her friendship, was that they might speak the same language as herself—as might many of the Irish peasants, for whom her brother worked and who loved him, as he loved them.

She told me, herself, the story of a young hunting man, beside whom she sat at one of her first dinner parties in her girlhood. And of his comment to someone afterwards :

‘ That filly has read too much ! ’

Another young man was to say later that, ‘ Lady Elcho carried unsnobbishness too far.’

One wonders if she knew that there was such a thing as snobbishness. Choosing her friends, she had, like all her family, a special feeling for ‘ creators,’ artistic and literary. There was another door to her friendship and it was the one I knew. She had the feeling of Lord Edward Fitzgerald’s great-grand-daughter for Ireland and Irish people.

I have written up to this of her early life, the framework as it came to me, in those brief vivid memories—her own or someone else’s—to hold the lovely figure that I knew.

Someone in my childhood, saying : ‘ Of all that family, Lady Elcho is the real angel.’ The Irish tradition of Lord Edward and of George Wyndham, the most beloved of Irish Chief Secretaries, for his great-grandfather’s sake first, and then for his own.

One may put of oneself, in such an article on such a subject, only what is essential to the picture that one is trying to make. But any qualifications that I have to write of Lady Wemyss would be nothing without the chief one of all, upon which I can see her swift bright smile fall, recognising and approving—more than a qualification, a claim, because of the country in which this article is written, the country which for every reason held the roots of our friendship. I saw her first—and I can never see that as chance—in Ireland, at Abbey Leix, the home, for so many years, of her sister-in-law, Evelyn, Lady de Vesci—and it would please her that, whatever is worthy in this tribute, should come from Ireland.

The roots, upon which I may just touch, were further back than that, earlier than childhood, struck before I was born—a feeling of my mother’s for Lord Edward Fitzgerald, a friendship with George Wyndham. It is one of the benedictions of life, when such roots put forth stems and branches of continuous friendship from one generation to another, making a wide shelter and security in the changing weather of the world.

‘ I am glad — is your friend,’ she wrote, in what was to be her last letter, ‘ for she is a rare friend, both in hard times and good times—and for your sake and for your mother’s sake (whom you know I appreciated in many different ways—amongst the many not only for her poetical gift, but for her romantic love and appreciation of my brother and our great-grandfather, “ the beloved Lord



Edward Fitzgerald,") I am glad she is your friend as well as I—as I have nearly got to Journey's End in this world. . . .'

From that English setting—Clouds with its magically lovely name, so strangely right and suitable, Stanway, golden with love and memories—my first vision takes her to a different frame—Abbey Leix in the summer of 1916.

Had places that were beautiful, a greater, clearer beauty during those War years, made from the agony that sharpened and intensified all experiences? Spring in war-time, summer, autumn, winter. For one generation, childhood and youth and the War, lived though simultaneously, cannot ever be separated. So, a memory, of country, a frosty winter morning, some magic of an early day of summer, will touch a chord and send one back to the music of those days.

Abbey Leix is radiant, in memory, with that almost intolerable beauty. Yvo Charteris, Lady Wemyss' youngest son, had been killed at the age of nineteen, at Loos in October, 1915. She and her two youngest daughters—one with her husband now a prisoner of the Turks—came to Abbey Leix for a rest, after the more than two months' suspense that had followed the Battle of Katia on Easter Sunday, when two Squadrons of Yeomanry—soldiers from English Worcestershire and Gloucestershire country—had fought on an oasis in the desert, against 3,000 Turks. When the survivors of that heroic company surrendered, Captain Strickland, Lady Wemyss' son-in-law, was taken prisoner; but, for more than two months, conflicting reports came about Lord Elcho. He had been taken prisoner. He was among the wounded at El Arish. Again, he was interned at Damascus. On the 1st of July came the Red Crescent telegram, annulling all previous telegrams sent by them, and certifying that Lord

Elcho had been killed at Katia. Lady Wemyss had heard the news at Clouds, where she wrote :

*' These are the memories of Clouds, bitter and sweet,  
Like asphodels in fair Elysian fields they bloom, for ever.  
Age cannot wither them, Time will not mow them down,  
For Love will keep our memories green, for ever.'*

Abbey Leix has a strange deep peace, in my memory of it, those days. It is set in the country of the Pale, which, lying under the Irish mountains, with all the Irish richness of colour, shows the influence of the English Plantation, in a comforting neatness and prosperity. The little town at the gates owed much, obviously, to the beneficent rule of the de Vesci family. Most of all, there was the beautiful influence of Evelyn, Lady de Vesci, Lord Wemyss' sister, and a Scotswoman, who loved Ireland and its people, with such a love as Percy Wyndham's description of his father's : ' He loved her deep down—with passion . . .'

I never pass the station of Maryborough without seeing, on that platform, Lady de Vesci's tall beautiful figure—like a priestess, in trailing black, without hearing her welcoming voice. She was seventy then, and, as if it was the natural thing to do, she had motored fourteen miles to welcome her guests at the station, herself. No memory of Lady Wemyss would be complete without a mention of the sister-in-law who is her peer, and such another soul as hers.

I heard Lady Wemyss use a phrase once of someone else, looking from her incredibly brave and heroic older age, with such great pity on the young, in their broken world : ' There goes a gallant soul ! '

I saw her gallant soul first, those summer days at Abbey Leix, the courage, the fine unconquerableness of spirit, that

was often, in after years, to be an inspiration and an example. The beauty of the background is associated for me with the rare spirits of those sisters in law and sisters in mind. I remember—digressions perhaps, but the background is part of the whole—the great bowl of sweet-peas on the landings through the house, the cool deep peace of the Irish summer days, the brooding beauty of the trees outside the windows, in the long green twilights. I never saw grief and loss more bravely carried, the victory of the Spirit more complete.

Writing this now I discover that some of that vision must have been realised later, seen through older eyes than mine were then. Two of us in that party were still children, but children who grew up during the War and had that knife to cut, even more sharply, the already clear memories of childhood.

We sorted sphagnum moss for healing of wounds, on the floor of the library, with its windows looking over the fields to the lake and the woods beyond. That was our peaceful occupation with the War, in which all of us were every hour deeply and vitally concerned.

There were magic things at Abbey Leix, which remain in memory—a later visit when the bluebells were out, those bluebell woods that are famous, deep rich seas of them with all the intensity of colour of Irish bluebells, that makes their English sisters pale and delicate by contrast—I saw Lady de Vesci walking through them once, as through some heavenly deep carpet, a suitable carpet for her. Under the trees, they came from unseen distance and stretched again to lost distances. Because the owners of Abbey Leix came then, only as visitors, the garden was overgrown. One looked through an iron gate in the wall into a sadness that was the spirit of many forgotten war-time gardens. From amidst the tangle of shrubs and flowers and weeds, struggling with

each other and the weeds winning, a statue of a boy stood out with a strange beautiful youth and life and gaiety. He might have been a symbol.

As in that garden and many other gardens, the grass grew high and ragged too over the cricket field at Stanway, with the players away. That cricket field had seen so many and varied players. Jessop making boundaries; Lord Elcho captaining village teams; and mixed matches of all ages and sexes—Lady Wemyss herself, according to her own story, having once walked to the stumps with her smallest daughter clinging angrily to her skirts, and followed by a string of Chows.

When, at the end of the War, the grass was cut and the first cricket match played again, with some of the old players, and the others, young boys, the same high courage that sent her later to see *Journey's End* three times over made her go down to watch them play.

The flame of their immense love for each other, that had made a radiance over Stanway and lit every room of the old house and every moment of their beings, sprang up strong and clearer than ever before, to burn through hours illuminated for eternity by it.

'I am so sorry for Papa who loved him,' wrote one son of his brother's death.

And for a sister: 'Tell — that — (her husband) is splendid,' and: 'I am so glad she has him to comfort her.'

Again:

'Tell Papa he must wipe out his sons and concentrate on his grandsons.'

I have two very recent pictures of Lady Wemyss, each in company with a tall grandson who had been a child when his father was killed. The quick, bright search of those

never-dimmed eyes, across a crowded London drawing-room for that young figure, which for her was not his only, but must have had a thousand poignant and tender and radiant associations. The absorption in him among all that company was clear—the only selfishness that I ever saw in her. When they found each other, it was as though they looked back, youth to youth, sharing their delight in this finding, as on another night when we all went to a film together, they sat beside each other, sharing their amusement and enjoyment of the story. That answering of their two spirits, with the missing significant generation between them, was a beautiful and memorable thing to have seen.

There was always, in that circle, a perfect mixing of all ages in perfect friendship and sympathy. It is one of the things that I shall remember—hearing from my window young voices coming from the garden and the older voices among them.

As Stanway—which had once been the summer residence of the abbots of Tewkesbury—had been a houseful of children, it remained a houseful of children. An always coming and going of grandchildren, accompanied by their dogs and often by their ponies. The cricket continued on the village cricket field and Lady Wemyss went down to watch the players play. So there were theatricals again—with other players, and children saddled their ponies in the yard—as other children had done—and rode off over the Cotswolds.

The children riding their ponies, or setting off on one expedition or another, would pass the War Memorial, now an inherent part of English country life. It stands just above Stanway, at the cross-roads of the way from Winchcombe to Broadway, and that from Tewkesbury to Stow-on-the-Wold (where—the old saying has it—the wind blows cold),

the way that the men of Stanway passed as they went out to the Great War. It has a beautiful simplicity :

‘Remember Alfred Henry Buggins, Frank Buggins, Henry Charles Thombe, Ernest James Townshend, William James Ewington and Francis Lane, Hugo Francis Charteris Lord Elcho, Yvo Alan Charteris, Charles Richard Gerald Mitchell and Fred Starkey, who fell in the Great War, 1914-1918.’

A company gathered together, part of the country for which they died, as once they gathered on the village cricket field.

There is a point farther away, where the road winds at the top of a hill, and, approaching Stanway, you see below you, for the first time, a glimpse of the house, with the old barn and the church and the village—all golden in whatever weather you see them—the light yellow in the long welcoming windows. Lady Wemyss had a little jest which she used to make at this point :

‘That’s the house down there where those horrid people live.’

I heard her make that jest a little more than three years ago, when I drove with her from her daughter’s house in Worcestershire, for the visit which gave me my last and loveliest memories.

Little pictures of her remain as clear as though they happened to-day. Settling herself and a guest into the car for the drive, a bright, half-mischievous, half-disarming, incredibly young smile, at someone in charge of the practical details, who had, perhaps, vetoed some unpractical suggestion of hers. Her most characteristic and appreciative humour was always inspired by herself. The arrangement of Chin Chin, the Chow, who went everywhere with her, and who, standing on the seat, looking haughtily out of the window,

had an oriental aloofness, a complete unawareness of any mortals outside the family who were privileged to belong to her. Chin Chin was the only snob I ever met in that circle. Perhaps she had to atone for her mistress's unsnob-bishness. As a family, that was the most dog-ridden in the world. A one-time London neighbour in Cadogan Square told me that the Wemyss dogs in that Square were the alarm of other dogs and dog owners. And a memory of Lady Wemyss', of the first London air raid, is characteristic. With the guns booming: 'I went out and fetched Pina from the Square; she was very glad to bustle indoors as fast as ever she could!'

There was a tender, adoring jest of one of her daughters, over which she smiled, listening—of how she had dreamed, when she was small, that Mama had given orders that she was to be painlessly destroyed, and as she was being led away, one of the Chows appeared, affording distraction, and the orders for execution were forgotten and not carried out.

That last visit of mine to Stanway was in January. Yet, after the grey day of arrival, for four days the weather was literally golden. I do not know how it happened, but it did. Day after day, the Cotswolds slipped into sunshine from pale mist. The villages were soaked in sunlight. I even remember a yellow sword of daffodils in bloom outside the door of the old church. And it is so that I shall remember Stanway.

With such memories. The long twilit corridor on the afternoon of our arrival. The firelight from my room streaming out into the grey to welcome me. It was like her to give an unimportant guest a room of such charm and atmosphere—the one that her great friend, Lord Balfour, always had, when he came to stay.

I can see her moving through the rooms, that limping yet

eager, ageless figure, the clearly-cut beautiful ivory face, framed in the pale scarf she wore over her head. I can hear her voice which so often had laughter in it. From the head of the dinner-table one night, I remember her glance round her guests, as one of her whimsical thoughts came, and she set them to follow it with her.

‘Let us say what we should all do if we had committed a murder,’ and her swift certain look and smile across the table at one of them. ‘I know what —— would do. She would tell everyone at once.’ Which was true.

There was a day when we lunched with her beloved friend of her lifetime at Stanway, Eliza Wedgewood, in her cottage above Stanton village. Standing on the steep path between the rockeries, where a few brave spring flowers showed, she stopped to tell me that the people said that there was always a flower in Miss Wedgewood’s garden, even in deepest winter. As, she added, there was nearly always someone on the path coming from the village, wanting something. Eliza Wedgewood, beautiful with the black lace over her grey hair, her rich voice and lovely humour and sympathy and interest in everybody and everything—feeding her birds at the window as we saw her that day—or sorting baby clothes for the village by the fire after lunch, while she remembered what Mr. Balfour or some other great statesman had said in this room—is an inseparable memory from Stanway. Part of Stanway, as she remains to the children and grandchildren of the house. From historic memories to which I listened, she and Lady Wemyss turned naturally to the question of dental treatment for the school-children and the dentist’s imminent visit.

Always I shall remember the drive when my visit was over, with my hostess to London, on the most golden day of all.



It was the first time I had had such talk with her and it was to be the last. She had always that gift, which I think of as a Wyndham one too, of conveying glamour, of making you feel the magic of something she was telling you, as in one witty phrase, she could describe a person. Because of her nature, that wit, for all its swiftness, never remotely touched cruelty.

She dropped out her wonderful memories as she dropped those unforgettable sayings, so full of imagination and humour. She could always convey the heart and feeling of an hour many years past, which is a gift that few people possess. During an earlier visit to Stanway we read one of Maurice Baring's books aloud, and talked of it afterwards. There was a description of a party in that book, which had obviously a special appeal for her. Had someone of another generation missed the glamour of it, found the description a little too long, as one used to short modern dances and Jazz might well find the old-fashioned ball and waltzes?

There was only a faint smile, a little distant, because that mist and music were still dreaming in her thoughts, a half-apologetic murmur that one felt that the people in the party were enjoying themselves. I don't think that she said in words that it had taken her back to some party of her girlhood. But one listener, at least, caught the magic from her and shared some of it.

It was on that drive up to London that she turned from something I should see, which she had been indicating, as we passed, to say: 'We like the same country and the same books.' And she spoke then of Abbey Leix, where we had met, and of Ireland and of her brother's love for Ireland.

She dropped out her lovely memories on that drive and I caught and kept some of them and lost others, equally precious. One, of the Souls—an earlier lovely glimpse of

her girlhood when she had gone riding and hawking on the Downs with some young man. It was like a medieval tale, with just the touch of young romance gilding it.

She imitated the cries of that hawker of long ago, with his interspersed asides to his companion, so clearly, that the chauffeur slowed down and looked round, thinking she was calling some instructions to him. I remember the amused, half-shy girl's smile with which she turned to me, after she had waved him on.

Another memory of her first dance. It had been in Ireland—a Hunt Ball, I suppose—and she had stayed for it with the Mayos at Palmerstown in Kildare (a house that was later burnt in the 1922–3 burnings). She had been eighteen, and the first dance was all that such an occasion should be. She said, smiling, that at it she fell in love for the first time, but not very seriously. She spoke of the gaiety of those days, for young people of her world—when no one had ever thought of being poor. And she remembered the day after the Ball, going hunting across the Kildare country : ‘With the waltz music still in our ears.’

From such memories, she passed easily in the generous confusion of her life which held so many thoughts and so many sympathies, to the need for water in the Stanway cottages, and how that could be supplied. Again, as I talked, she interrupted me because we were passing Blenheim and I should look at it :

‘I am like a tiresome old woman in a play—interrupting,’ she said with a smile.

Much else she spoke of on that drive which cannot be written. If I have lifted some sacred veils, writing this, it is for a world that needs them ; as in her privately-printed *Family Record*, she set down some of the thoughts that hurt her most, only so that they might help other people. She

was one of the people who was always helping—as if, indeed, she looked upon herself as an instrument, that her purpose in life. She might—although she would never have seen herself so—well be, as she was for so many people, the Hand of God, Which must always be a human hand.

In this she is, and will be, immortal. So that, in a dark hour for those who are her friends, the thought of her is still the flame that she lit for them, while living. One who dwelt recently among these memories of her, searching among written records, re-reading those characteristic letters, every word as swift, as alive as the flying wings of a bird, turned from that experience to face a possible blow that might await her. It did not come. But if it had come, she had known suddenly she could have faced it. For she had looked recently on immortal courage, for some days, trying unworthily to write of it, had lived in that high company. From which she must go out strengthened, as many a one went out from a visit to Stanway.

It was not for nothing that the walls of the house were deeply golden, that the light in the windows was always there whatever the weather. The fire of her welcome, streaming into a grey twilit world, was the earthly comfort and manifestation of that flame of courage and love—unassailable—that was her spirit. That fire has not gone out, and the flame is eternal and inextinguishable for Mary Wemyss' family and her friends.

## TREASURE FOR HEAVEN.

*When we meet again  
 In the strange Hereafter, you will gravely say,  
 'I have talked with Plato and with Socrates,  
 Matched irony with Heine ; Goethe's mind  
 Has bathed me in its radiance, and the flame,  
 The leaping flame of Shelley's danced by mine.'  
 And I shall hurry to you, with my hands  
 Still full of earthly flowers, garnered long since  
 For you, not faded yet, and breathless say,  
 'A few more mortal years were mine, to glean  
 The loveliness you lost by early death.  
 Here is a winter evening with the hills  
 Witch-blue in the distance ; here, the smouldering sky  
 Where a June sunset burns behind the spires  
 Of our Northern Athens ; here, the western wave  
 Washes in opal on faint silver strands.*

*I never saw the mountains, nor the dawn,  
 Moonlight on snow, nor any strange and sweet  
 Aspect of lovely nature, but I laid  
 Its treasure to my heart, longing for you  
 In mortal flesh to share it. See, I bring  
 These transient glories to this timeless air,  
 Heaped in my arms, to enrich even heaven for you.'*

A. V. STUART.

## *A TRIO OF MUSICIANS.*

BY LAURA M. RAGG.

OVER the head of executant artists there hangs always and inevitably the shadow of death ; not the death of the body, common to all humanity, but that of renown, which is dearer to them than physical existence. The dramatist and composer may hope for immortal fame, or at least for those 'revivals' which fashion grants in compensation for periods of obscurity. But those who have been their interpreters know themselves for 'poor players' who after their brilliant hour upon the stage 'are heard no more'; and who in age, as natural infirmity removes their means of expression, and the circle of their admirers thins, are enfolded prematurely in the shroud of oblivion.

Herein lies the pathos of a manuscript lately put into my hands. It is an unliterary compilation made by a trio of musicians, in which press notices and programmes, invitations, artists' letters and royal commands are strung on a thread of narrative written in a tongue not their own. Fundamentally it is an attempt to 'peize the time' of former triumphs, 'to eke it and to draw it out in length.' Ostensibly it is a tribute of gratitude to dead and living patrons penned with the innocent vanity and strange humility of the artist who fails to realise that genius gives more to 'the rich and great ones' of the world than it receives from them. Consciously it is a record of musical events in Europe, and particularly in England, in Victorian days. Unconsciously it gives the portraits of three very pleasing personalities—

sisters whose mutual affection was proof against jealousy, of professionals quick to recognise merit in amateurs, and ungrudging of admiration for masters and comrades.

The three Eissler sisters were on both sides of Czechoslovak parentage. Their father took his degree as Doctor of Philosophy in Prague, and subsequently taught in the principal Colleges of Brno, his children's birthplace. He was a man of learning and culture, an excellent linguist, an indefatigable public teacher. He played no instrument; but he had a good ear and musical taste. He attended concerts with pleasure, and was able to sing correctly any air he heard at them. His wife as an amateur pianist conformed to the unexacting standards of her day; but possessed a latent critical sense which developed steadily as she followed and encouraged her daughters' musical career. That career was chosen early by the intelligent and industrious little girls.

Emmy, the eldest, was given piano lessons by the best organist of the district, who had been the first teacher of Neruda (Lady Hallé), also a native of Brno. When Emmy outgrew his teaching she was sent to the Conservatoire in Vienna.

The second daughter, Marianne, began at the age of six to take lessons on the violin, and when she outgrew the teaching which Brno afforded, Professor Eissler determined to migrate to Vienna. Emmy had already gained a scholarship at the Conservatoire, and Marianne before long followed her example. The musical education of the girls thus cost their parents nothing. The elder, moreover, had inherited her father's capacity for teaching, and while still a student was employed by her master, Professor Anton Door, to coach junior pupils in his methods. Later, the widowed Frau Eissler gave lessons in languages. Thus the industrious family were able to live upon a meagre income, and to

decline the financial assistance offered by a wealthy relative on the condition that the young ladies abandoned all thoughts of a professional career. Well indeed was it for the girls, profoundly musical but also profoundly dutiful, that their mother held advanced views as to female independence, and never opposed their hearts' desire. Years later when the same male relative heard the Misses Eissler play at a successful concert given by Patti in Vienna, he acknowledged the rightness of the family decision.

Very happy were those laborious student days in old light-hearted Vienna. Music was the atmosphere in which the Eisslers lived, moved and had their being ; and their ambition was fed continually by tales and glimpses of the great *virtuosi* of their day. Once, after a concert, Marianne was actually addressed by Brahms. The child always contrived to insinuate herself into the artistes' room ; and on a certain bitter evening Brahms wrapped her in her thick cloak, and, taking hold of her long auburn curls, asked if ' these should go inside or outside ' the garment. Then there was a day when Emmy's master, Professor Door, introduced her to Anton Rubinstein, who made her play some of his own compositions. It was a terrifying moment with a satisfactory issue ; for after the audition Rubinstein asked the trembling young student to give lessons to his own niece. She also taught the daughter of Gustav Walter, and that incomparable singer of *Lieder* showed much kindness and hospitality to the youthful teacher.

Younger contemporaries, as well as fellow-students, came to the Eisslers' apartment in the evenings to make music. Popper, already celebrated as 'cellist and composer, would bring his 'cello and play to Emmy's accompanying, or would seat himself at the piano and accompany Marianne's violin. Pachmann, restless, irritable, and eccentric, and, at the age

of thirty, still almost unknown, would perform, and listen respectfully to Madame Eissler's wise counsel, that he should put himself in the hands of a good agent, and try to find a public in England. Emmy, still a student, had found one in Vienna, and after one of her recitals received a tribute of mysterious but precious admiration. A little packet of valuable jewellery was handed to her with a note from an unknown admirer, who in those pre-typewriting days preserved his anonymity by a curious and elaborate expedient. He cut letters out of printed matter and pasted them on a large card to form the following 'epistle :

' A young girl like yourself, who with filial love and self-sacrifice maintains her family, deserves to stand high in men's consideration. Unfortunately there are in life certain circumstances which for ever forbid one to approach the object of one's esteem. These little tokens of admiration are given with the sole object of affording innocent pleasure to a young girl of excellent quality. If this aim is attained, there remains for me nothing but to wish that life will give you all the happiness you so richly deserve.'

In a novel this incident would form the prelude to a complicated romance. In real life it had no sequel. Yet perhaps its mystery made it doubly thrilling to the imagination of a maiden of eighteen.

By this time the Benjamin of the family, little Clara, having heard the harp at a Conservatoire concert, had announced her intention of becoming a harpist. Like Marianne on the violin, she began her education on the instrument of her predilection, studying besides the history and theory of Music.

For three years she worked under Anton Zamara in Vienna. Then she began to yearn for the tuition of Hasselmans in Paris. Her wise mother decided to uproot the family again,



and to make a home in Paris for Clara from which her elder daughters could start conveniently for their concert-tours in Belgium, Holland, Germany, Bohemia and Austria.

In Paris Clara made rapid progress, and felt the advantage of her choice of instrument. She had but few competitors among students or full-blown professionals, and therefore at a tender age had many opportunities of growing accustomed to facing an audience. Her master encouraged her to play in church oratorios, and even allowed her to accept occasional invitations for concerts. He took her himself to Rouen to play at a Jeanne d'Arc celebration in the Cathedral; and further chose her as harpist when a cantata was to be given in honour of Franz Liszt, who was paying a short visit to his compatriot, the painter Munkacsy. Liszt was present at the rehearsal, and at its close, struck by the little harpist's pure and rapt expression, he pressed a kiss on her brow, exclaiming: 'Voici une petite Ste Cecile!' The wonderful afternoon was succeeded by a yet more wonderful evening. Munkacsy's stately music-room filled with beautiful women, the white-haired figure of the venerable genius at the piano, his rendering with unimpaired vigour of his own arrangement of Hungarian melodies, the enthusiasm of the audience, some of whom went down on their knees to beg for an encore: these were indelible memories, made the more precious by the passing of the great *maestro* a few months later.

In the heat of the summer the family went to Ostende, where Emmy and Marianne gave a recital, at which eleven-year-old Clara made her first appearance on a public concert platform. The conductor of the Ostende orchestra heard her, and when his harpist had to leave suddenly before the end of the season, he asked the little girl to step into the breach. So well did she acquit herself that she found herself

engaged for the following summer season. Clara Eissler, with her long flowing hair and small harp, placed in front of the ranks of adult male musicians, was a piquante figure ; groups of children would gather near the orchestra to watch her ; items of the programme in which there were prominent harp passages were invariably encored ; and when she was out walking strangers would recognise ' *La petite harpiste* ' and smile and nod to her. It was a very proud little girl who went to the Office to draw her monthly fees and bring her earnings back to her mother. At this period too she had a *succès fou* at a concert at Aix-la-Chapelle, where she played in a concerto for harp and orchestra by Bochsa and then two solos by her master Hasselmans. A little later she toured in Germany with her violinist sister Marianne, astonishing her critics and her audiences with her mastery of her instrument and her perfect self-possession of demeanour.

Meanwhile the elder Misses Eissler were winning fresh laurels as they toured in Germany, Belgium, Holland, Bohemia, Austria and Denmark. Marianne, though she had not yet ' put up ' her long hair—an art which in those pre-shingling days definitely marked the passage of the *Bachfisch* into womanhood—had gained immensely in musical technique and social *savoir-faire* ; and modest Emmy, whom the cares of primogeniture had early matured in character, was efficient both as chaperone and as accompanist. Every fresh success increased their contacts and engagements. Thus when Joachim had heard Marianne play in his house at Berlin, he recommended the Musical Society of Bremen to engage her for a concert. Recitals at Berlin where Madame Joachim was vocalist led, at the singer's request, to an engagement with her at Breslau. Success in other Silesian towns was followed by an invitation to Gorlitz and an acquaintance with the dramatist Mosu, whose play *Der Bibliothekar* is well

known to English audiences as *The Private Secretary*. He was enchanted with Marianne's rendering of *Il Trillo del Diavolo* by Tartini ; and when his fellow-townsfolk arranged a concert to celebrate his jubilee, she was asked to come to it and repeat her *tour de force*.

An appearance at the Kurhaus concerts at Baden-Baden led to an engagement at one of the Festival concerts given annually in honour of the reigning Grand Duke, and this again to their playing at a musical evening given for the Emperor and Empress of Brazil—the former a real connoisseur of music—and to a matinée at the villa of the Princess Elizabeth of Baden. Then, too, they enjoyed less formal musical evenings at the house of an old composer, Jacques Rosenhai, where they met Madame Schumann, who subsequently welcomed them in her house at Frankfort. For her Marianne played the rarely heard concerto by Gade, the Danish composer who had been a friend of her late husband, Robert Schumann. It was not, perhaps, a mere coincidence that the young violinist was presently invited to Copenhagen, in order that she might play the concerto to the composer himself. So enraptured was the aged master by her interpretation that he threw his arms round her and hugged her !

The sisters' first experience of a State Concert was in Berlin, where they played before the Crown Prince and Princess. Princess Christian, who happened to be a guest at the Palace, reminded them long afterwards in London that she had heard them before. Their next royal command was from Duke Ernest of Coburg-Gotha, who after their performance conferred on them the honorary title of *Kammervirtuosen*.

The fact that German was their mother-tongue—for their use of Czech was restricted in childhood to intercourse with

servants and dependants—doubtless contributed to their popularity in German-speaking countries. To Italy they did not go till they were ‘in mezzo del camin di nostra vita’; and in France they were heard only in a few Parisian houses.

Madame Blaize de Bury, Madame Buloz, wife of the famous editor of the *Revue de Deux Mondes*, and gifted Madame Juliette Adam asked Marianne to their receptions. Paris, moreover, furnished the young violinist with some of her most precious musical memories.

At Madame Adam’s house she met, and was warmly complimented by, Gounod, and heard him sing to his own accompaniment on the piano his lugubrious ballad ‘La Glue.’ She was introduced to Sarasate, who bade her come and play to him whenever she liked, and gave her invaluable advice both as to the interpretation of his own compositions and on violin playing generally. To her he subsequently dedicated his composition, ‘Le Rêve.’ The Belgian violinist Marsich, then resident in Paris, was scarcely less kind. He asked her to include in her concert programmes an Adagio he had written, saying she had ‘the bowing and the style for it.’ He wrote a few bars of it in her autograph book, which was already adorned by some bars and the signature of a noble and more aged virtuoso; Cammille Sivori had been a pupil of the great Paganini, and it was vastly flattering to the young girl to be acclaimed by him as ‘ma charmante collègue et excellente interprete.’

Marianne’s desire to visit London was fulfilled when she made her English *début* at one of the Philharmonic Concerts organised by William Ganz. Two other notable conductors of the day, Kuhe and Sir Julius Benedict, then engaged her to appear respectively at the Albert Hall and St. James’s Hall. An invitation to take part in a concert given by the

Royal Amateur Society, in which the Duke of Edinburgh habitually played the violin, led to a further request for her co-operation in a Musical Evening given at Clarence House, of which she retains a souvenir in the shape of a sapphire and diamond ring presented to her by the Duke and Duchess.

Emboldened by their successes the sisters determined, towards the end of the London season, to give a concert of their own at Princes Hall, and to send for little Clara—still studying in Paris—to take part in it. Many notable musicians were in their audience, among them their friend Sarasate, their fellow-townswoman Neruda, and a harpist, previously unknown to them, from Wales. John Thomas was delighted with the performance of the youngest of the talented trio. He begged little Clara to come to see him, and gave her several of his own compositions. Subsequently he dedicated his *Rondo Piacevole* and *Romance* for harp and violin to the two younger sisters.

When Clara's three years of studentship came to an end, Frau Eissler, who had never struck roots in Paris, determined to remove herself and her daughters to London. It was a decision eminently agreeable to the musical trio, and was productive of many years of happiness and success. Earl's Court was somewhat inaccessible in days when Londoners were dependent on cabs and horse buses, but it enjoyed almost rural quiet, its rents were low, its houses well built, and its air salubrious.

In 1892 the family found a spacious domicile in Redcliffe Square, in which the three sisters could practise their respective instruments without disturbing their neighbours or each other, in which, too, they could, in modest fashion, entertain their musical friends.

The reasons for the Eissler sisters' swift success are not far to seek. *Impresarii* found them easy to deal with, reliable,

unexacting, untemperamental. Musicians recognised them as genuine and industrious artists. Hostesses discovered that they had excellent manners and were intelligent and adaptable. The sentimental British Public found the trio of graceful, fresh-complexioned young girls a pleasing spectacle, and admired their modesty, virtue and sisterly affection. Their engagements multiplied, and they were soon initiated into the pleasures and peculiarities of English country-house visiting.

The major portion of their almost dateless and somewhat prolix manuscript is devoted to incidents in their sojourn in England. These may conveniently be grouped under three heads : (1) their Command Performances at Windsor, Balmoral and Osborne ; (2) their intercourse with other musicians of the time, particularly with Adelina Patti ; (3) their relations with the principal musical hostesses of their day.

(1)

No British-born subjects of the ageing Sovereign could have been more loyal than this trio of young foreigners. They had, and have, a positive cult for Queen Victoria ; and the day when they received the first command to play before her is marked with white in their annals. The command came in the form of a peremptory telegram : ' You and your sisters are to play before the Queen on Thursday next in the evening. Please come to see me to-day about four. Ethel Cadogan.'

It was a bolt from the blue, piercing and overwhelming, till Miss Cadogan duly explained its happy *raison d'être*. A Spanish tenor, Señor Viñas, then appearing with great éclat in the first performances of *Cavalliera Rusticana*, had been engaged to sing to Her Majesty, who had expressed a

judicious wish that the vocal programme should be balanced by some instrumental music. Signor Tosti had then suggested the names of the Misses Eissler. He escorted them and Señor Viñas to Windsor, and, kind and merry fellow that he was, did his best during the short railway journey to dissipate their nervousness by funny stories. A royal carriage conveyed them to the Castle, and there they found a little suite of rooms allotted to them, where they could change and rest and enjoy the refreshments served to them. Then they were conducted to the Green Drawing Room ; the Queen and Royal Family and guests entered, and the presentations took place. 'The Queen,' writes Miss Eissler, 'spoke so graciously to us that our nervousness soon disappeared ; and when, after each piece, Her Majesty smiled and nodded approval, we began to feel quite at ease.' Wishing for a repetition of one of the concerted pieces, she came forward to the piano herself to ask for it ; and after the concert she and Princess Beatrice expressed their warm appreciation in terms which brought a glow to the sisters' cheeks and hearts. The artists were then taken to supper, when they were joined by members of the Household. A special train took them back to London shortly before midnight.

Some eighteen months later the sisters again played before Queen Victoria, but the concert was not in England, but at Coburg. The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh and Coburg were marrying one of their daughters, and the royal grandmother graced the wedding. After the concert the Duke led Marianne to the Queen, saying : 'I have known this young lady since her first *Bogenstreich* in London.' He was surprised when his mother instantly replied : 'I too know her already ; I had the pleasure of hearing her at Windsor.'

Among the royal guests were the Princess Alix of Hesse and the Czarevitch ; and on the following day their betrothal was announced. So then there must needs be a second State Concert, and again the two Eissler sisters were engaged to perform at it. It was a brilliant function ; but the sisters noted that the future Czarina, in spite of her youthful beauty, had a strangely sad expression.

In the June of 1894 Marianne received a letter from the Hon. Alec. Yorke, then at Balmoral, which contained a mysterious paragraph. ‘Will you be in Scotland about the end of August ? If so, there may be some pleasant news for you ; I will tell you when we meet.’ The sisters had, in fact, been invited by Lady Glenesk (then Lady Algernon Borthwick) to stay at Glenmuick House ; and the pleasant news was the Queen’s wish that all three should come to Balmoral Castle from Monday, September 3rd, till the following Friday and assist at two afternoon concerts to be given in connection with a bazaar in aid of the rebuilding of Crathie Church.

‘It can easily be guessed,’ wrote Emmy, ‘how we all felt on arriving at Balmoral on Sept. 3. It was a chilly, gloomy day, but to us all appeared bright. We found blazing fires in each of our rooms and all imaginable comfort in every way.’

The sisters played not only at the two concerts, but nightly in the drawing-room of the Castle, and ‘each evening the Queen had a gracious word for us.’ Clara took both her harps to Balmoral, one for the concerts, the second for the drawing-room ; and there, one morning, Princess Beatrice came to play the piano with the younger sisters, reading the accompaniments at sight. She showed them some of the songs she had composed ; and for one of these, ‘Retro-spection,’ Marianne and Clara subsequently wrote a harp,



violin and organ setting, and frequently performed it at charity concerts.

Intercourse with Princess Beatrice was resumed when they moved nine miles away to Glenmuick, at the close of their happy three weeks' stay—filled with walks, drives, picnics and after-dinner music-making. Lady Borthwick arranged a great evening of *tableaux vivants*—then a fashionable form of amateur entertainment—with incidental music. The 'frame' was lent by the Castle, and from the Castle came tenants and supper servants, as well as the principal dinner guests, Princess Beatrice, Prince Henry of Battenberg, the young Princess Henry of Prussia, and the Duchess of Albany, who talked in German to the Eissler sisters.

Guests who thoroughly enjoy themselves and who contribute to the entertainment of a house-party are always welcome; and the sisters were warmly invited to repeat their visit in the following autumn (1895). A command to play at Balmoral was also repeated, though this time they merely drove over from Glenmuick. Emmy, the pianist, was not with them, having had to take her mother to Switzerland; but Princess Beatrice proved to be an entirely efficient accompanist. They were astonished when the Queen congratulated them warmly on their 'great success in Vienna last January,' though they already knew from Lady Monson, then British Ambassadress at Vienna, that it was to the Queen that they owed the recommendation which the Duke of Coburg had written on their behalf to Princess Metternich. 'Had it been possible to increase the devotion we felt for England,' this and the kind hospitality of the Monsons would have done it.

The following autumn there was a third visit to Glenmuick and a third command to play at Balmoral. That year Emmy was free to act as her sisters' accompanist, but

her part in the performance was insignificant, and when after the concert they were conducted to the Queen, she, with her usual modesty and self-effacement, felt herself unworthy to share the honour of a presentation, and remained quietly by the piano. The aged sovereign's reading vision was becoming dimmed, but few persons escaped the observation of her prominent bright blue eyes, and few actions her penetrating perception. When she rose to retire, aided by her Indian servant, she turned aside to the piano, and said in a low voice, and with her sweetest smile: 'This evening you have kept in the background, so I come to tell you how much I have enjoyed your music.' At supper souvenir brooches with the crown surmounting the date 1897 were brought to the sisters with a special message: 'The Queen thinks you might like to remember you played to her in the year of her Jubilee.'

The following year the younger sisters played again before the Queen. Tired with the London season, they were invited by General and Mrs. Somerset Gough to come to Woodlands Vale, Rye, for a rest. It was a musical household, one of the daughters being an excellent pianist, and Marianne and Clara enjoyed a little music in the evenings, but expected no professional work. But the Queen, according to a now stereotyped routine, was spending the summer at Osborne, in the residence which, more than any other, was filled with memories of her Prince Consort. Had he not reconstructed the house and planted the grounds? And the loyal Misses Eissler desired to see those grounds. Their hostess applied for a permit and named her guests. The permit came, and with it an expression of the Queen's wish to hear them at Osborne as soon as her band arrived and matters could be arranged with Sir Walter Parratt, who was to be the conductor. So on the 10th of August Marianne

played the incomparable concerto of Mendelssohn with the orchestra, and Clara two harp *solis*, for one of which the Queen demanded an encore. They were rewarded a few days later by the photographs (signed) which the Queen reserved from reproduction, and a letter from the Dowager Lady Lytton which contained the treasured phrase : ‘ The Queen said again last night that you were both charming and that everybody liked you so much and your lovely music.’

Eight months later the Queen set foot on French soil for the fourth time since she and her Consort had paid their visit to the Third Napoleon and the Paris Exhibition. In the spring of 1889 she had gone to Biarritz ; in 1890 to Aix-les-Bains ; in 1892 to Costebelle. Now another spot on French Riviera was selected ; and a wing of a hotel *de luxe* at Cimiez above Nice formed a convenient residence for the Royal guest and her suite. Frau Eissler had also found the mists and damp of London insupportable ; the house in Redcliffe Square was abandoned ; and a legacy from Mr. Schwabe—ever a good friend to the three sisters and to all musicians—had enabled them to purchase a pretty little villa on the Californie hill at Cannes.

The district discovered by Lord Brougham was in its prime. The villa domains widely spread among its wooded hills were the resorts of rank, fashion, wealth and international culture. There was no Casino, no municipal supply of diversion. The *tempo* of social intercourse was relatively slow ; but quiet hospitality abounded. There were music lovers and gatherings for music, notably at Lord Rendel’s winter home, Château Thorence ; and the Eissler sisters were quickly recognised as valuable additions to the community. At Nice Princess Beatrice heard of their activities

and—always quick to procure the pleasure of music for her mother—arranged that the sisters should come over to Cimiez to play in the Queen's drawing-room.

To-day a car or motor-bus takes us from Cannes to Nice for an evening's amusement ; then, rooms had to be engaged in the hotel for the night. And that April night happened to be one of unmitigated showers. Ruefully the sisters envisaged a walk through the dripping garden from the main entrance of the hotel to the Queen's private wing. But Her Majesty had also had an eye on the unpropitious weather. The Eisslers were donning their wraps when a message reached them that the Queen had ordered a door between their *étage* and her own apartment to be unsealed, so that they might pass, without a wetting or fatigue, directly into her drawing-room. She welcomed them with a smile, and when Clara seated herself at the harp called from her seat : ' I am so pleased to hear you play again.' The programme finished, she asked them to give her as an extra the *Preislied* from the *Meistersingers*, arranged as a duet for harp and violin. Then she spoke to them of their new home, saying she knew the villa must be close to the church of St. George, erected in memory of Prince Leopold. Next morning they were again presented with brooches as souvenirs of the evening.

It was the last time they played to the aged, music-loving Queen, though they saw her once again the following season, when they received an invitation to the Buckingham Palace Garden Party.

(2)

The Eisslers' relations with contemporary musicians could only be dealt with adequately in a separate article, and must be very briefly epitomised.

Early in her career Marianne toured with Antoinette

Sterling, and at concerts, public and private, they associated with Albani, Santley, Edward Lloyd and Foli. Among organists they knew Dr. Stainer, who greatly admired them, Sir Walter Parratt, whom they met at Osborne, and Sir Frederick Bridges, who asked the younger sisters to perform for him at a recital in Westminster Abbey.

They worked under several distinguished conductors : Sir Frederic Cowan, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Sir Arthur Sullivan (for whose popular song, 'The Lost Chord,' Marianne once played a violin and Clara a harp obbligato at a charity concert given by Sir Charles and Lady Du Cane), and William Ganz, with whom, as Patti's accompanist, they were intimate.

One of the first persons to come for music and conversation to their house in Redcliffe Square was the renowned conductor of Wagner Opera, Gustave Mahler. Herr von Dulong, the tenor, would come and sing to them, Willeburg, the violinist, would play with Marianne, and Popper, the 'cellist, was ready to play his own instrument or the piano, as required. Of Popper they retain one absurd memory. After dining with them one evening, he determined, in a fit of economy, to return to the Langham Hotel by Underground. Unfortunately he did not grasp where he was to alight, and after sitting in his third-class carriage for a long period, he found himself at a station he recognised. It was that from which he had started : from which he judged it safer, after all, to take a cab.

Both Popper and Willeburg were cheerful souls, and kept the Christmas house parties at Craig-y-nos, Patti's Welsh home, in a state of perpetual merriment.

Great part of the Eissler MS. is filled with recollections of Patti and with letters from her, which are always signed 'Your loving Auntie.' Early in their career they toured

with her, and acquaintance thus formed ripened into affectionate intimacy. The famous singer lavished on her young friends both hospitality and gifts, among them a 'Tourte' bow, which Marianne used with the 'Bergonzi' violin presented to her by London admirers.

Clara rejoiced when she was able to do her 'Loving Auntie' a signal service. Patti, as Signora Niccolini, besought her to discover wherein she had offended the Queen, who no longer commanded her appearance at Windsor. Clara knew that Her Majesty's rigid abhorrence of divorce was the only reason for the ban, and courageously started on an attempt to restore her friend to favour.

Tactfully she instilled into the ears of the Queen's *entourage* her version of the case. Not sexual irregularities, but the gambling habits of the Marquis de Caux had caused the singer's divorce from her first husband. She had borne patiently his absorption of her earnings, till a day came when he suppressed a telegram announcing the death of her father, in order that she might not cancel her evening's engagement and lose the remuneration he had already staked upon the *tapis vert*. Patti could not forgive this outrage on filial piety, and Clara knew that its recital would arouse the Queen's indignation. She further represented that Patti's meeting with an honourable man who cherished and protected her was subsequent, not anterior, to the breach with the Marquis de Caux; that the pair enjoyed complete domestic happiness; that the Diva was an excellent stepmother and chate-laine, a friend to the poor around her and a patroness and promoter of numerous philanthropic undertakings. Clara's own character made her an unimpeachable witness, and the Queen had a penchant for the little harpist. Before long Patti received a command to sing at Windsor—with the proviso that Mr. Niccolini was not to accompany her. She

went ; she sang ; she conquered. Her Majesty commended the Diva in significant terms : ‘ How beautifully you sang the aria from Tannhäuser, and how well you pronounced the German.’

The encomium was well deserved ; for the Italian singer had struggled valiantly with the German tongue. In 1894 she had written to Marianne : ‘ To pronounce “ Allmacht-ge Jungfrau ” and “ Wurd-ge Magd ” is terrible ! My tongue hurts me for several hours after singing . . . I am sure if Wagner had known how delicately I always treated myself and my singing he would have been less cruel.’

(3)

The sisters’ activities in England may be divided into two classes—those which brought them financial remuneration and those which were gratuitous. In the first category were pupils—of which the harpist had the largest number—and concerts, public and private. In those spacious days, before rank and wealth betook themselves to luxury flats, and the servant problem—which even more potently than death duties has transformed the structure of society—was non-existent, musical hostesses entertained lavishly and regularly during the London season. Mrs. Ronald, herself a fine vocalist, gave Sunday afternoons at 7 Cadogan Place ; in Piccadilly Sir Algernon and Lady Borthwick held weekly receptions, and Lady Goldsmid had Friday evenings ; Baron and Baroness de Reuter gave immense parties at 18 Kensington Palace Gardens ; Mrs. George Coats (Lady Glentanar), to whose talented daughter the Eisslers gave lessons, held similar entertainments in Park Lane ; while Mr. and Mrs. Schwabe had small gatherings on Sunday evenings. The fee given by them to performers was only the guinea which would have been earned for a lesson ; but the sisters delighted

in these intimate collections of really musical people, and learned to know and love their hosts, to whom in later years they were indebted in various ways, and finally for a legacy enabling them to purchase their villa in Cannes.

These private concerts had the further advantage of enabling them to hear some of the most famous vocalists and instrumentalists of their day, and of bringing them into contact with celebrities of all descriptions : ecclesiastics, actors, men of science and painters, among whom Sir Edward Poynter became a special friend.

Of private concerts in the provinces the Eissler MS. contains a long list. Almost the first for which they were engaged was one given by Lady Anthony de Rothschild, which carried with it, in those pre-motor days, an invitation to stay the night. Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone were guests at Aston Clinton on this occasion, and the sisters naïvely regret that they ' had not as yet sufficient knowledge of English to follow the conversation ' of the G.O.M. His daughter-in-law, Lady Gladstone of Hawarden, a gifted amateur violinist, was subsequently to become their very good friend, as was Lady de Rothschild's daughter, Lady Elliot Yorke.

Another notable evening was that of a concert in the Library at Blenheim given by the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough in honour of the then Prince and Princess of Wales, which included an invitation to stay in the Palace.

The innumerable Charity Concerts for which the younger sisters gave their services—especially during the Boer War—and their visits to country houses, while they brought no grist to the mill, did greatly enrich their minds and memories. They brought them into close contact with all that was best and most typical in the life of our ' Upper Ten Thousand ' ; and, moreover, enabled them to see some of the loveliest



spots in Scotland and rural England, and to view at leisure the interiors of historic houses. Thus at Apsley House they were shown Wellington relics and dined at a table decorated with the gold and silver ornaments presented by the Portuguese to the Iron Duke. At Maiden Bradley they revelled in the lovely gardens, accompanied the Duchess of Somerset when she sang Scotch songs, and were driven about the country in the Duke's four-in-hand. At Duncraig Castle on the west coast of Scotland they saw a new type of scenery, and met, among other notabilities, the Maharajah Gackwar of Baroda, who tried to persuade Clara to visit him in Baroda and give lessons on the harp to Indian ladies. At Witley Court they were interested in the treasures and curiosities brought home by Lord Dudley from many lands. At Glamis they were lodged in 'Prince Charlie's rooms.' At Vaynol they were introduced to the menagerie of Mr. Assheton-Smith, who preferred the roaring of his wild beasts to the music of his wife and her friends.

At these and many other historic country houses they were of course expected, in return for hospitality, to contribute to the after-dinner diversions of the house-party; but it must be noted that the contribution, if superior in quality, was not different in kind from that of non-professional guests or, often, hostesses and their daughters. Their narrative, in fact, like that of other memoirs of the time (notably those of Lady Radnor, conductor of what was termed 'The Countess's Orchestra'), conveys the impression that Victorian England was far more music-loving than is the England of to-day. The despised 'accomplishments' of our grandmothers did, in fact, produce not only a small number of fine amateur instrumentalists and vocalists, but also a large number of appreciative listeners. For if practice does not always 'make perfect,' it does create, as nothing else can do,

a sense of the difficulties overcome, and the various renderings given, by great artists.

Could the Eissler sisters renew their youth and return to this country of their adoption, they would find half their occupation gone, and would be heard in its 'Stately Homes' only if they received the favour of a 'broadcast,' or a gramophone record were made of one of their public performances.

The fateful August of 1914 found the Eisslers in a cottage at Ballater they had rented for the summer. A return to Cannes was impossible ; and though the damp of English winters proved fatal to their aged mother, they would be the first to acknowledge that nowhere in Europe could they have spent the War years with less discomfort than among their influential and sympathetic British friends.

After five long years they returned to Villa Morava, to an altered Cannes, and to straitened financial circumstances. Unlike many artists, they had always been frugal ; but the savings of their palmy days, invested in Austria, vanished with the collapse of the Central Empires, while the capital sunk in their little property in France at a time of soaring prices could not be realised in the general slump of land values.

Yet as they sit in the shabby rooms of a villa too large for their present needs, surrounded with souvenirs of their former prosperity and friendships, they would, I think, dispute the Poet's aphorism that

*'Sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier days.'*

## *WOMAN OF THE SIDHE.*

BY L. STEWART BOYD.

BIG IAIN was a very old man : so old that there was no work for him in the boats or at the nets. He had nothing to do all day but sit alone on the cliff-top, feeling the sea wind on his face. Sometimes, sitting there, he slept and dreamed : sometimes, when the wind and the booming surf stirred him out of his dreams, he wakened to stare serenely away beyond the rocks of Colgarra to the misty Sea of the Hebrides.

There he could see his kinsmen riding the grey waves in little boats. They were all kin on Colgarra and he knew all the boats as well as he knew the men in them. He watched the pleasure steamers too, recognising and remembering them by small differences of detail which his keen eyes noted as they glided gracefully past the island, their red funnels belching smoke, their paint and brass making a splendid shine and on their decks the outlanders shivering under the bitter wind that always rakes the Hebridean seas.

There are many little islands of the Hebrides, scores of little islands freckling the forlorn mists with glints of black and green. Like dark jewels they glimmer on the breast of that haunted sea and in and out among them the steamers thread a pleasurable path all through the summer. For many summers since he had become too old to work, Big Iain watched them pass. They always passed Colgarra. He could not remember ever seeing a tourist on the island.

For Colgarra was neither beautiful nor romantic. It was a bleak compound of rocks and rain, mist, peat and a few fisher families. From the sea it looked insignificant, and

out beyond its sea-bitten cliffs a ring of reefs, always covered with a fret of white water, kept the big ships at a respectful distance. The reefs guarded Colgarra from civilisation. Behind them the island was inaccessible, a fortress that had unconsciously defied invasion : the Norsemen had passed it by and the English, and now there would never be a harbour for boats or hotels or golf or any other wonders of civilisation.

But the islanders scarcely realised what they were missing. They never went over to the mainland. The men were all fishers : the women worked the crofts and sat behind their spinning-wheels in the evenings : and the children went to the school where the minister's wife turned herself into teacher. The minister was himself a son of Colgarra. He was born in one of the poorest crofts, and because he had come back Colgarra loved him. There were others who had gone away. But they never came back, and for that the islanders were resentful and suspicious of the mainland folk. They did not want strangers. The mail steamer passing and stopping once a week out beyond the reefs stopped near enough for them.

It was Donald's boat that was Colgarra's link with the world. Regularly his small craft slipped across the white water and came bobbing against the steamer's side. Then bundles were tossed down to him from the hold and he grinned and passed a word with the deck-hands while the bundles were coming down. But he had never actually set foot on any of the steamers or spoken to the outland passengers who looked at him and his boat from the high decks above the hold.

Usually he went alone. But the day after the big storm the sea was running high and the surf around the rocks was stronger than the strength of one man's arms : so Donald

took Seamas, his friend, with him on the boat and gave him an oar.

Seamas and Donald had always been friends. There were no friends on the island like them : yet they quarrelled and fought constantly. From their cradles they had thrashed each other over almost every cause in the world, but except to cuff them apart the fishermen did not interfere in their quarrels, for it was known that the two were better than brothers and their quarrels were only the sparks raised by Seamas's fiery temperament striking against the cold iron of Donald's nature. •

Big Iain drowsing in the sun was proud of them both. They were fine lads, fine fishermen, like the rest of their kin : and he was thinking they would soon be men, no longer young cubs clawing each other in play but grand men in the flower of their youth. The old man savoured a pagan pleasure keen as the wind in contemplating the splendour of youth.

The storm-raised waves were running high. They undulated sullenly towards the reefs, there breaking to foam in sudden white anger along the black teeth of the cliffs. The spray of their breaking splattered old Iain's face. That wakened him fully. He bent his blank eyes down serenely upon the fighting waves. Down there, riding the hills and valleys of the sea, Seamas and Donald were skimming towards the steamer that waited for them far out, a splendid alien insolent thing in the greyness of the sea.

Once he used to ride the waves like that in a frail shell of a boat. But he was too old for the oars now, too feeble in the arms to be wanted in the boats by the strong young rowers. He sighed with the weary patience of age. He was only waiting for his death to come on him, and now he remembered that in heaven there would be no more sea.

That was the thought he sighed over. He did not know how he would be getting along in heaven without the sea.

‘The Lord knows best,’ he muttered dubiously into his beard. ‘But I will need to ask the minister about that.’

Then he forgot heaven and sat stiffly staring out at the steamer. The little boat was turning back to Colgarra. But now it had three figures in it, not two as there should have been but three, and the third, from the yellow shine of her hair, was surely a woman. Surprise held Iain, so that at first it did not occur to him to go and tell the folks. But presently he recovered himself and, rising, he went along the cliffs to spread the news.

‘Ho, there’s a woman coming ashore. A woman in Donald’s boat.’

They came out of their cottages to see for themselves. They gathered in a shy group along the cliff, shading their eyes with their hands and talking to one another in guttural monosyllables. There was no doubt about it. Donald was bringing over a woman, sure enough. They could see the sun in her hair and the white flutter of her garments.

Wanda Fayre was bound for Colgarra. Why, she did not quite know. She was like that, did things and went places on the spur of the moment because it was much better fun living that way. And anyway, she was Wanda Fayre. The Wanda Fayre. It was enough that she saw Colgarra, black, forbidding and ringed perilously with reefs : and the polite officer on the steamer said no one went there : and the sun was glittering on Seamas’s red hair, and Donald’s handsome face was dark and sullen. Back in town she had spoken casually of buying an island, one of those little romantic Hebridean islands where one could get right away from everything. She was not sure yet whether she meant it or not, but it was publicity, so there was no harm in looking

at Colgarra and considering it. Again, the film value of the scene occurred to her. Another Man of Aran location this. And those big uncouth lads. She saw herself in a flash starring in a kind of picture new to her. It was all remote and nebulous in her mind. She did not really know why she had her luggage sent over the side and followed it into the little boat. But she was Wanda Fayre. She was expected to do things like that.

Seamas and Donald rowed her to the shore. They flickered uneasy glances at each other, and in a sudden terrible shyness kept their eyes averted from her. They were confused and troubled by her richness and beauty. Her hair was different from any hair they had seen. It lay close against her head in miraculously even waves, each wave very tiny and regular like the corrugations left on the sand by the tide : and she had golden curls, also very tiny and numerous, so wonderfully arranged that Providence might have said she should have six little curls here and six just there. Moreover, her mouth was red, not ordinary red but the colour of freshly cut meat : and her fingers were tipped each nail with the same red. But for all that she was very desirable.

On the cliff-top Big Iain and the fisherfolk watched the boat come in. When they saw her closely, however, everyone, even Iain, slipped away back to the clachan. There they lurked mistrustfully at windows and doors, wishful to see more, yet leaving the cliff and the landing-place bare. As they watched they talked among themselves. They could not remember such a thing happening before. Even Iain could not remember a precedent, and he was the oldest of them all. So they shook their heads again and said that maybe it would be best to leave Seamas and Donald to deal with the outlander since they had brought her over.

The young men beached the boat. Seamas carried their passenger through the shallow water and set her down. Then, only a little wet from the surf, she patted her hair into smoothness and laughed. The little tinkle of her laughter had a silver sound like small bells tinkling on an ascending note, and it had good box-office value. To Seamas and Donald, who had never been to the cinema, it was new and excellent music.

‘I think I’ll stay here a day or two,’ she said. ‘Tell me, where is the best boarding-house, for I hear there isn’t an hotel?’

They looked at her and floundered in the sea of her charm. They looked at her mouth, that raw wound, and her hands that also were tipped the colour of blood.

‘A boarding-house?’ Seamas said, mutilating the word. He shot a glance at Donald, the intelligent one, but Donald’s blue eyes were blank. The word was new to both, but they suspected that they would not have that sort of house on Colgarra, where the ancient cottages were all alike all over the place, sheltering hens and cows as well as humans.

‘A house to stay in,’ said Wanda patiently.

Light broke upon Seamas. He stammered, ‘Oh yes. If you would be waiting here a minute——’

Wanda Fayre smiled. Gathering her sea-spattered coat round her, she seated herself on her luggage. She began to hum a little tune, one of her own theme songs which had become so popular since she sang it that one heard it everywhere now and all the time. But she liked it.

The lads took another look at her. Then they went clattering up the cliff-path to the clachan.

‘I will ask my father to bid her to our house,’ said Seamas.

Donald shook his head. ‘Don’t be troubling your parents. Mine would be pleased to invite her.’



‘It’s no trouble at all. And anyway, it was myself she asked.’

‘You? That’s a lie.’

‘A lie, you said?’

‘Ay.’

‘Ah.’ Seamas halted on the path and took off his coat. Donald did likewise, and without more words they settled down to fight in furious silence.

Presently Wanda wearied of sitting alone. From the steamer’s deck the island had looked romantic; but the beach was bare and desolate, and the sea even more desolate now that the steamer had slipped away into the mists. And the wind was cold and she was feeling hungry.

Leaving her luggage, she walked up the path the lads had taken. Round the corner she came upon them. They were rolling over and over on the stones, pummelling each other: almost to her feet they rolled, but they were too busy to see her. She stood for a minute watching them and still they did not know she was there: then she walked on to the clachan. There, without any trouble, she got herself invited to stay with the minister’s wife.

The fishermen came and dragged Seamas and Donald apart. Held by the hard hands of their kinsmen, they stood glowering. Released, they walked off in opposite directions, and thoughtful glances followed them. It was nothing unusual that the two lads should fight, but before they had always fought themselves back into friendship.

Now it seemed that something had come upon the boys. The fishermen did not like it. It was strange that their new mood coincided with the coming of the outlander to Colgarra. The thoughtful glances turned from Seamas and Donald and sought the grey walls of the minister’s house, but no one spoke and their thoughts remained

unuttered. Yet, later, in the clachan there was some uneasy talking.

In the minister's house Wanda Fayre was welcomed, for the minister was ill and his wife, a gaunt woman from a Free Kirk manse on the mainland, cherished a secret hunger for the refinements of civilisation. She was glad to have a visitor. She took Wanda walking round the island and Wanda uttered little delighted exclamations at the glimpses she got of a primitive people. But they were only glimpses, nothing more. Courteously, with such subtle courtesy that she knew nothing of it, the clachan folk kept her and the minister's wife beyond their thresholds. They manœuvred so that her shadow did not fall across their doors. And the minister's wife noticed that an unusual number of the women and children were not at home.

'They are a shy people,' she explained to Wanda.

'But so sweet,' said Miss Fayre, smiling radiantly.

In sunshine alternating with misty rain the day passed uneventfully. There was a quietness in the clachan. The quietness was in the air and in the cottages : almost it could be felt like the quiet before a big storm breaks. It was as though a storm was coming over Colgarra and yet the sea ran no higher than before and no storm signs gathered on the horizon.

The fisherfolk waited for it, holding Seamas and Donald in leash. The lads wanted to fight out their quarrel and now there had to be someone always stepping between them to keep the peace. But for the first time their kinsmen would not let them fight. It would be unlucky.

For there was that dark foreboding in the air and that sense of waiting. Everybody knew that if a hare runs across a man's path there will be a death soon : and that a man should burn his nets and his gear if a woman has stepped

over them because never will he catch fish with those nets again. Likewise everyone knew that the outlander woman brought an omen of blood to Colgarra. There it was on her mouth and her fingers for anyone to see. Blood. Even a babe in the cradle would see the woman brought ill luck with her.

The first of it had lighted already on Seamas and Donald because they brought her over : and if they fought now their friendship would be over for ever. That the islanders knew, and it put sorrow on them, for they liked the lads and they liked peace.

Up in the grey manse the minister's wife sensed a little of the clachan's mood.

'It is a pity Seamas and Donald have quarrelled,' she said uneasily.

Wanda raised her delicate eyebrows. 'Have they quarrelled ?' she asked.

She knew they had. She had seen them rolling over and over on the stones. In a way it was exciting.

'So delightfully primitive,' she said vaguely.

A clamorous wind sweeping in from the sea at dusk shook the windows. Above the wind the surf growled like an animal, the menace of the sound warring with the high scream of the wind. The minister's wife drew the curtains and put more wood on the fire. But she could not shut out the sound of the wind and the sea or make pleasant the sombre look of the island as it crouched naked under the night mists.

For a moment she was afraid of Colgarra and the sea, as she had been afraid years ago when she first came to the island. As then, she wondered what was in the islanders' minds, what their real thoughts were, those they kept hidden from her behind the impenetrable walls of reserve they raised

against all incomers. She did not know. She had never known, for she was not a Colgarra woman. The minister would have known : but he was ill.

In her sudden uneasiness she drew closer to Wanda Fayre, who could not understand either : then she felt safe and civilised again.

Down in the clachan the fisherfolk were talking deep-throated Gaelic over their fires. There, too, the sea raised a bitter howling, but the clachan folk were born with that sound in their ears ; it was so familiar that they did not even hear it except in times of storm, and then the old wives drew in closer to the red peats, muttering that the lost ones of the sea were fighting out there in the dark.

‘It is a pity about Seamas and Donald,’ one said.

A fisherman made a contemptuous noise in his throat. ‘Tcha,’ he said. ‘What is come over their fathers that they haven’t put an end to the matter with belts?’

‘Ay.’ The first man shook his head. ‘But would a belting rid them of the bad luck the foreign woman has put on them?’

An inarticulate murmur stirred through the hard-faced talkers and passed like the smoke of the peat, leaving a heavy silence. In the silence they began to rise and slip away into their own houses, closing the doors behind them, and the sound of the wind sank to a sobbing, a womanish sobbing that was distressful to hear.

In the morning when Wanda walked through the clachan, women who saw her made furtive signs with their fingers. She did not notice that, nor was the minister’s wife allowed to see the precautionary gestures, for the clachan folk remembered all at once that she was only a foreign woman herself when all was said and done. They had had a word with her already. And she said that a red-painted mouth and

red finger-tips meant nothing at all on the mainland, where it was a fashion, nothing else.

She spoke absently with her mind on other things, for she was a busy woman and the minister's illness had put a lot of work on her. The villagers listened courteously to her. She got again the hopeless feeling that in their courtesy they were walling themselves off from her and she could not understand it.

'The cow of old Ceit has died on her,' a woman said abruptly.

'Of old age probably,' she smiled.

'No doubt. And last night the thatch of my house caught fire. Never has it caught fire before. I would like a word with the minister,' the woman said.

The gaunt lady of the manse raised her eyebrows. 'But you know the minister is ailing.'

'Ah.' The woman turned away. 'One hopes he will recover.'

The minister's wife was busy with many calls to make. Wanda Fayre left her and walked on alone to seek Big Iain on the cliff-top. She liked Iain. He was so big and old and gentle, and unlike the others he would stay and let her talk to him : and always he bore himself with unconscious pride, as if he were an ancient king sitting on a throne of rocks. The wind took her thin dress and tugged at it with urgency. Along the cliffs the sea was chanting a terrible psalm of conflict.

Big Iain listened to the sea and looked at Wanda thoughtfully.

'Old Ceit's cow has died on her,' he said.

She thought he was so old he must be a little mad. To cover up her thought she smiled.

'I'm sorry about the cow,' she said.

‘ Ay ? ’

He stared at her fingers. He was thinking that in his father’s time they would have known how to deal with this. He thought of what his father would have done : put the unlucky one in a small boat perhaps, and turned her away from the island to drift or to sink under the grey waves. In the labyrinths of his aged mind he mused on the thought. But one could not do these things now. So he sat still and listened in courteous silence to her talking. But suddenly something ominous in his silence penetrated to her mind and she felt the wind cold on her skin : and the chanting of the sea became too loud for her voice. She was afraid. But she could see nothing to fear. The old man was senile. Keeping his fingers crossed like that was a senile trick he had : that was all.

That night in the clachan a cry arose and there was a flurry of women suddenly roused from sleep. A child was taken with convulsions. The child did not die, though for the first time the villagers did not call in the minister’s wife who was skilled in nursing. Instead they turned to an old wise woman of their own, a bleared crone nearly as old as Big Iain. They watched her while by crude treatment she brought the child back to quiet breathing.

Then, sobbing, the young mother took her baby back in her arms. But the wise woman hobbled away shaking her head.

‘ Maybe the child should have died,’ she muttered. ‘ For there will have to be death yet—and a babe is only a babe.’

She went spreading her thought to the others and they listened, big men and hard women turning pale like children frightened of the dark. They feared nothing except witches and omens and the drowned souls of the evil ones who came up out of the sea at night. In these things they believed

implicitly and their belief was older than the faith behind the minister. So the young mother was the only one who was not half-sorry that the child had lived. The others circled their thoughts round Seamas and Donald. It looked black for them, poor lads : for they were in love with a woman of the Sidhe.

The morning wakened clear and bright with a gay wind that frolicked over the dun moors and the rocks that stabbed the island's thin soil. The fishers' cottages were grey in the sun : too old and grey to be brightened even by the summer sunshine : and the women of the cottages were grey too, and shadowy in their drab petticoats and enveloping plaids.

There were no men about when Wanda walked down to the beach. Most of them were out with the boats. The muddy paths through the clachan were quiet as she went unaware to put a light to the smouldering rivalry between Donald and Seamas : and nobody knew what was happening, least of all Wanda. She had only expressed a desire to go out in one of the little boats : and Seamas, the quick one, was there ready to take her. Donald was not so quick. He was left behind, sulking.

Big Iain met the red-headed lad near the beach.

'Does your father know about the boat?' said Iain ; for it was the only engined boat on Colgarra and Seamas's father valued it highly.

'He knows,' Seamas said.

His fair skin turned dull crimson and old Iain nodded shrewdly. He suspected that the boat would be going out in secret. He went along the shore, nodding his head and muttering to himself, till he came upon Donald moving stealthily near the boat-house. Infatuation had that day turned Donald very pale, not lobster red like Seamas. But it took them both ways and both were the foolishness

of youth. Iain said nothing. He took Donald's arm and they walked up the cliff-path to the old man's favourite seat.

'Are ye sick, Donald?' he said.

'No.'

'Ah,' said Iain, and smoked his pipe and took a look at the sea. It was a wild view he got from the cliff-edge: black rocks below, the Sea of the Hebrides beyond, and between a creaming surf that swirled over the hidden reefs. Donald with his sick look was whistling softly to himself an air about a seal woman who 'married a fisherman. It was a very old song. Iain had heard it crooned when he was in his cradle.

'Are ye up to a trick, Donald?' he said softly.

The boy stopped whistling. He turned his eyes from the reefs. He was looking ill, as if he had been eating green apples.

'He will have to swim home,' he said strangely. 'Seamas I mean. If he ever gets home. I am hoping he does not.'

'What have ye done, Donald?'

Donald put his hand on the old man's arm. His hand was shaking. Iain could feel it shaking and the trembling hand angered him. He thrust it off his arm roughly.

'Look,' said Donald, pointing to the sea.

Seamas and his motor-boat rounded the cliffs, skimming in a wide sweep to keep clear of the black-toothed rocks. The end of his wide half-circle would take him to the landing beach where Wanda would be waiting. Iain narrowed his pale eyes, watching the boat. At first when he saw it its course was steady. But now it limped and sidled in the water: then it stopped and went drifting aimlessly on the waves.

In the uncertain sunlight Seamas's hair glittered as he



moved to the engine. Against the white of the surf and the grey of the sea his hair was distinct like a little beacon burning. Iain watched. Donald stood stiff and miserable beside him. They could see the red-headed boy bending over the engine, working at it as coolly as though he were in the boat-house on the beach.

‘Why doesn’t he swim for it?’ Donald exclaimed.

Big Iain spat. ‘He would lose the boat.’

‘But he will have to swim now. Doesn’t he know it, the fool?’

‘He will not, though,’ said Iain with certainty.

‘Why not?’

‘Och, boy. Wouldn’t his old one belt him if he lost the boat? It is the only one we have, that.’

Donald shuffled his feet uneasily in the scanty grass.

‘He is drifting fast,’ he said. ‘The tide-race will get him if he will not swim.’

‘Well. And isn’t that what ye wanted?’ Big Iain asked him softly.

‘Ay.’

The boy’s voice rose in a tormented cry. It came back on the wind, the monosyllable long drawn out as if it streamed behind him as he turned and ran down the cliff-path. He ran in long loping strides to the boats on the beach and began pushing one out into the water. He splashed after it, swinging himself inboard. Big Iain sat down again on the cliff. He was thinking that Donald with his strong young arms should reach the motor-boat before it was in real danger from the tide-race. That was the terror of Colgarra, the tide-race that swept round from the sea and eddied between the reefs. In it no man could swim and no boat could live. But Donald knew what he was about. Iain took up his pipe and sucked at it serenely.

He could see Donald's boat skimming alongside Seamas. The two boats were together, the lads standing in them, and Donald moved to take the crippled boat in tow. But Seamas would not be saved. Crimson-faced, he stood and raged at Donald. He waved his fists. Now they would be fighting. They were mad : up on the cliff Big Iain clicked his tongue over their madness. Then, muttering, he laid aside his pipe. For Seamas's fist shot out, catching Donald squarely on the mouth, and Donald swayed under the blow overboard into the sea.

'Bad, bad,' Iain muttered.      '  '

He waited for Donald to come up again. Seamas waited too ; but he did not come up, and Seamas dived like a seal into the grey water after him.

To Iain it seemed they stayed down a long time, longer than he liked. And then he remembered about the foreign woman and how they had said from the first it was the lads she would take ; for had she not put her hands on them, she the unlucky one with the red of blood on her fingertips ? Then for him the familiar sea took on a look of horror and the heaving breast of it was dark with foreboding.

Iain, still muttering, hobbled down to the beach and bent stiffly to put out a boat. He took up the oars and sent the boat skimming through a smother of white water. It was a long time since he had rowed out to the reefs. The young men said he was old and that was the truth, but the noise of the reefs, a hungry sound, was in his ears, making him remember that in his day he had been a fine boatman, and the years were slipping away from him at the feel of the water against the oars.

He leaned back as the sea lifted his boat high. Up on the crest of a wave he peered through the spray, searching the sea ahead. The two boats had disappeared. He could

see nothing but water. Then he slipped down into a valley between two waves. Spray drenched him and the creaming sea poured across his outstretched legs. His heart was beating hard. He was aware of the labouring thud of it against his ribs as he pulled the boat up against the tide.

Rising again, he could see Seamas's red head. He had Donald : he was swimming strongly with Donald close to him. Towards them Iain oared in among the reefs where speed and strength did not matter any more and only skill would keep a boat afloat. He used to be good at negotiating the reefs. But he was old now and his skill was broken up by the weakness of his body. He sighed angrily over his own weakness. But at the same time he edged the boat farther in.

There between the reefs the water twisted and swirled. It was a silent twisting, more ominous than all the clamorous surf beyond. Far into that water a boat had never gone except as wreckage reeling on and down to a final battering against the rocks. In the old days it had been a good game for the young men to play, this venturing near the place of whirlpools : but it was no game for an old man.

Suddenly the snaking water took his boat and flung it far past the two heads in the water. Iain shot back with a powerful sweep of the oars and all his body trembled. He could not do that again : not that mighty sweep of muscles tautened against the sea. He knew he could not do it again. It was the first and last echo of his vanished youth. Quavering, he called to Seamas to be quick and grasp the bow of the boat and Seamas caught hold. He crawled inboard, helping Donald over. They dropped together and squatted a moment, getting their breath back, and the old man, glowering at them and panting, gave them the moment. Then he kicked at them with his heavy boots.

‘Listen,’ he said bitterly, ‘we will put an end to this to-day.’

Then he gave them the oars. They took the oars and Iain, released from rowing, slipped back in his seat. He drooped a little, seeming to become smaller, until he was a huddle of wet garments and no more. A wave slopped over the boat, drenching his drooped body. He did not move. The lads rowed on with their backs turned to him. Later when they beached the boat and went respectfully to help him out, he did not move, and they saw that for him there would be no more sea.

A swift shower of rain darkened the sunshine. Under the rain Colgarra lay grey and black, very silent even around the clachan while the villagers debated what they should do. Presently, in the silence a band of fishermen and their women gathered on the strip of moor behind the clachan and walked up to the minister’s house. There, outside the house, Wanda Fayre was standing. She smiled uncertainly when they came on her, but the smile faded as a murmur, very quiet and sullen, rose up from them. She caught only the menacing sound of it, not the Gaelic which she did not understand. But she was afraid. She turned suddenly to go. Then they picked up stones from the moor and flung them and she ran.

In the minister’s house, sobbing, she found shelter. But the fisherfolk swarmed up to the house and an old man pushed open the door. Behind him the others crowded into the neat grey house, apparently not angry, silent, making no noise but the clatter of their heavy boots on the floor. They moved together with the certainty of an inflowing sea. But the minister heard them and came down, leaning on his wife’s arm. They drew back from him again like

water receding, until they were all outside again in the rain. Then he closed the door and put his back against it.

Seamas's red-bearded father stepped forward.

'It is written down,' he said reproachfully, 'that ye shall not suffer a witch to live.'

'There are no witches,' the minister told him.

Red Seamas shook his head with respect and reproach. 'It is in The Book,' he said.

The minister sighed. 'Ah, well, Red Seamas. I will know what to do.'

He would know what to do. Seadh ! He had education and he was the minister. In twos and threes, as quietly as they had come, the fisherfolk slipped away back to the clachan. There, in their houses, they watched the rain and waited for something to happen : and an hour went by, then another.

Then, with the minister and his wife beside her, Wanda walked down to the beach, and it was observed that though she was still very beautiful, her mouth was coloured a natural pale red and her finger-tips were as white as they had been when she was born. All her luggage came behind her. It was piled into a little boat and the minister handed her in after it : then, as a tourist steamer glided into sight out of the mist, Seamas's father rowed her out over the surf.

Up on the cliff the fishers watched her go. The wind whipped back their sombre clothes and beat against their dark faces : grouped there, they stood patiently against the wind until they saw her taken up by the steamer. Then they relaxed and the breath of a sigh passed over them : and Wanda in the steamer sighed too, with relief that she had not after all bought herself an island, because she really could not understand those people . . . and it was a pity, because

really they seemed so sweet, so charmingly primitive, and then to attack her for no reason whatever . . .

The steamer took her away from Colgarra, the first and last tourist to land there. But Seamas and Donald did not see her go. They were busy down on the far beach mending a boat together.

### SONG OF THE TROLLS.

*We are the wind, and we are the swift, grey rain.  
We sing the songs of water; the dreams we dream  
Are the rippling thoughts of the heavy, secret boughs  
Shaking a light of leaves down the smooth-voiced stream.*

*Our hair waves under the wind with the wild green grass,  
And flowers that come are the laughter of the trolls  
Where the soft light glows in the earth like a film of moss  
As, laughing, we pause, while the circling echo rolls.*

*We have forgotten the sun, but the moon is ours;  
She makes faint music, thin as a silver horn,  
And we lie and listen, and say no word till it dies  
In a tremble of beauty, swooning under the dawn.*

*We are the depths of woods, where the light is dim,  
And the lonely traveller halts with startled eyes.  
And we are the wide, high light on the moors, and the seas  
Of murmuring fern dark against half-lit skies.*

*Swinging on winds, and pulsing in thunder drops  
Loud on the leaves; asleep in the frozen stream;  
Curling in earth like roots, and ageless as they;  
Thus, this are we; and ours is an endless dream.*

MARJORIE STANNARD.

*BIRDS ON A DEVON ESTUARY.*

BY G. B. GOOCH.

## I.

THE stream that flows past my window is for ever taking our thoughts to the distant sea. In the spring when the curlew, flying back to nest among the hills, brings us tidings from the shore, every first seen swallow, martin, wood-wren or whitethroat—and hosts beside—turn one's thoughts to far-off seas and foreign lands. But though the stream still hurries to the coast, the birds after their long journey bid us stay. And so it comes about that the stream's insistent call falls on deaf ears during the warmer months. Indeed, at times it is drowned in the song of many birds. In the autumn, however, when many birds go south, it is heard again, gently at first but rising to a clarion call after the first September spate. Does the bird-watcher catch the spirit of unrest that sweeps through the feathered world at the summer's end? I think he does if he spends his days among the hills in a district veiled in cloud. Anyhow, when the sun shines dimly through a thick white mist that covers miles of moorland, and the stream roars past at our feet on its journey to the sea, we go to the coast if we can.

The coast for us means the river-mouth. What do we expect to find? In the first place the sun—reason enough to dodge the clouds that cap and clothe the hills. Then there are birds which in mid-winter transport one to a fairyland decked in bright colours and peopled with forms of life rare and strange to an inland dweller. How often, I wonder, have I not stood on the banks of our stream

and, looking out across the valley on a winter's day, seen in imagination flocks of birds banking and wheeling over acres of estuary mud. For the stream gives promise, if we would but follow, not of one bird or several, but of untold feathery legions. And does not one's joy in watching a single bird increase out of all proportion, when even a score appear? A flock is not merely an assembly of individuals—it is very much more than that. A small solitary bird may be likened to a drop of water on a leaf which, though exquisite, is still at the most but a jewel in a perfect setting, while the cloud from which it fell may transfigure a mountain. So it is with a flock of birds.

Leaving the rain-soaked uplands, where a raven croaks across an otherwise birdless waste, we feel like brigands descending from a stronghold to pillage rich lands near the coast, where even the clouds—as they seem from afar—are sometimes flying birds. But our weapons are binoculars, and when we return in the evening, climbing up until we are a thousand feet above the sea, our spoils are but the memories of the birds we have seen. Fleeing from a mist that is white, we have on occasions reached the coast only to find the estuary swathed in fog. I remember in particular one morning when it was just possible to see for half a mile in a ghostly world of grey. In utter silence the river seemed to wait the lifting of the mantle that held it in the grip of a gladiator's net. It was not a good beginning for a day in search of birds. Yet as things turned out, we could not have had a better.

Looking first towards an island in the river, we saw a crowd of cormorants standing about and drying their wings in the usual spreadeagle fashion. So many in such a small space loomed black and large across the water in the haze. Actually we could not see the island, for it was completely



hidden by these extraordinary living gargoyles that accordingly seemed to stand in a group upon the water. A small flock of sheld-duck, swimming near them and twinkling black and white in the distance, gave us the only trace of light in the all-pervading gloom. On an ordinary day we should have seen the broad chestnut band across the white breast which, with the scarlet bill, makes this bird a quite astounding patch of colour on a winter's day, and a flock of several hundred flying overhead in bright sunshine an experience to remember for a lifetime. In the fog, however, it was pleasant to look at something that was neither black nor grey. Presently, beyond these birds, more black and white specks appeared, flying just above the water. Approaching swiftly, they were soon obviously geese, and Brent at that with their black necks and white sterns. Dropping down close to the island, which grew as the tide fell, they swam about waiting for standing room on the mud-bank. So strange was the light that they looked like duck very much nearer than they actually were. A moment later a solitary bird flew up, those already on the water greeting its arrival with the weird 'honk-honk' of a goose. This, and the deep laughing quack of the sheld-duck, provide a fitting background to the musical notes of the waders that flit over the mud-flats. On this day of fog, however, an almost unbroken silence expressed the feelings of birds and man.

Certain now of a successful day, for if no other birds appeared we could at least return to the geese, we walked on up the river towards a vast expanse of mud. Myriads of black dots covered its surface in a broad fringe that ran for nearly half a mile beside the river, every dot a bird, every bird a coot. Beyond this vast assembly water foamed white, we thought, over a submerged bank, but as we drew

nearer we saw that in reality we were looking at a flock of swans. Beyond the swans were coot again. We were beginning to realise the possibilities of this dim grey world, in which everything had so far combined to produce a gigantic woodcut in white and grey and black. Now the swans and the coot ahead promised us the best black and white picture of the day, but, as so often happens, the unexpected turned us from our path. Walking one moment eagerly towards the great white birds standing in the flock of coot, the next we had forgotten the swans and had stopped to look at the coot themselves. For, singly and in the mass, they gave us the most exquisite living woodcut I have ever seen, with their black bodies and white bills. Hitherto the black had been an ordinary black, the white the white of swans, but in the fog every coot seemed clad in deep black velvet. On the head, moreover, it looked as though it had been brushed up the wrong way, so that the head was not only blacker than the body but covered apparently in a little bristling busby of feathers. Here, against the very blackest part, gleamed a bill and frontal plate of the purest ivory white.

Numbers came close to us as we crouched behind a bush, to dip their fascinating bills into a runlet of water, to sip, throw back their heads and swallow. All the time there rose upon the air the soft splashy sound of myriads of muddy feet treading on estuarine ooze, and when we stood up and set hundreds running, this noise swelled to a roar. And yet we had disturbed but a fraction of those that were feeding here. Had they all started to run at the same moment, the sound would have been that of a landslide, as it is when an acre of roosting starlings is startled in the night. Apart from this continuous muddy murmur, the silence was complete save for the occasional unearthly yelp

of a curlew in the fog or the more familiar sound of a song-thrush cracking winkles.

To those who know the coot only in broad daylight and in small numbers, I despair of conveying any sort of impression of these birds feeding on the mud-flats in the fog. They reminded me of monstrous inky scarabs walking on their tails, and when an individual took to its wings, it strengthened this impression. For just as it was about to alight, it dropped its legs and began to move them at a frantic speed, so that on touching the ground the legs were moving at the right pace to carry it on at a run. Nor can I hope to express the beauty of the ivory bill in that light. On a bright day it loses half its charm. I watched a coot recently swimming amongst some reeds that only slightly softened the glare of a wintry sun. The bird came so close to me that it filled the whole field of my glass, yet it was not the bill on this occasion but the ruby eye and the velvet head that attracted my attention. I hardly noticed the bill at all. It was just an ordinary coot's bill as I had known it, or thought I had known it, all my life. In reality, I suppose, I have seen it only once, when my wife and I stood beside the river in the fog. Occasionally, of course, a bird is remembered above all others of its kind owing to a special combination of circumstances. The bird's plumage, the background against which it is seen, the observer's mood, these things and many others have the power of imprinting on the mind the living image of a wren, a wagtail, a couple of flycatchers or a drowsy flock of burnished teal. The ivory bills, however, did not exalt the coot in quite this way. I felt rather that on this foggy morning we had discovered a new expression on the familiar face of a common bird. Nor is there anything strange in that. It happens repeatedly if you watch and love wild

animals out of doors. But this new expression was so strangely beautiful that it was very hard to tear ourselves away. When at last we had done so and had walked a little way with many a backward glance, a vivid flash of blue rent the pearly-grey curtain of fog. It was a kingfisher, a messenger from a sunny world, but its breast was the colour of the sun seen through haze, dim and red.

## II.

Often, leaving Dartmoor in the rain, we reach the coast to find the sun shining brightly between clouds that here pass high overhead. A pleasant breeze adds movement to the sea, which on such a day is now glass-green, now deep blue, here perhaps grey and there quite brown where white waves break on a sandy shore. Returning in the evening, we take with us a whole new seascape of delights. The world grows dark, but not in our eyes which still look out on sunshine and shadow running races with the wind across the waves. The world grows silent, but not in our ears, for a moorland stream brings the sound of crashing water to our very doorstep from the sea. The night is as sweet as the day. And what of the birds? They are at times forgotten, for I am not one of those who find the world 'but a sad and empty place' when for a little while no living creature is in sight. But I agree with Hudson when he adds that all the varied forms of life give the world 'a meaning, and a grace and beauty and splendour not its own.' I like at times to put aside my glasses and to journey with the birds, our fellow-travellers, along the road of life. If the bird-lover misses on this cliff a peregrine, on that slope a woodlark, if he is for ever thinking of the bird he saw in this place the other day and hopes soon to see again, many of the lovely things in life will pass him by. Though

a place may be so wonderful that the absence of living creatures is scarcely noticed, it must be admitted that when a number do arrive, it is as though a forest tree suddenly burst into bloom—but the beauty of its form is often then forgotten.

We do not, of course, as a rule leave the coast without a few entrancing pictures of the birds we love. It may be only a little dunlin, a common sparrow among waders, that made us smile because it was so particularly tame and absurd. As it scampers past, its legs, whirring madly indeed, still do not present the blurred appearance that might be expected. They do not even seem to cross. Instead, one apparently sticks out in front and one behind, each vibrating violently. This strange effect and the bird's tight, solemn little face give one the impression that here is a dunlin performing a fantastic new dance step, practising with all the earnest concentration of one about to undergo an examination. Or it may be a flock of silvery grey plover flying against a glass-green sea, their jet-black axillaries twinkling as they go. It may be a flock of white birds far out over the waves, sweeping across the water, a diminutive, dazzling snow-storm of life. In this case it may well be a mad-hatter's snow-storm, for as we look on, single flakes, becoming heavy on a sudden, detach themselves from the glittering mass to fall with surprising speed and a splash into the sea. The extreme whiteness of the flakes, the occasional meteoric descents and the resulting spurt of water, all tell us that these are gannets. Donning our seven-league boots—taking up binoculars—we come upon a scene of glorious, indeed riotous, abandon. With slowly beating, black-tipped wings, some two hundred gannets circle over the water. Suddenly and almost before they have time to close their six-foot span, two or three,

four or five, even nine or ten drop headlong, nearly touching, into the waves. The sea boils at this onslaught, but more and more hurl themselves into the same place, never to reappear—or so it seems to us, for in the confusion of flying spray it is difficult to watch the water closely and notice their return. Individuals are diving all the time, but the flock as a whole has periods of quiescence that alternate with others of frenzied activity. The transition, however, from one to the other is so startlingly abrupt that one cannot help feeling that the birds are abandoning themselves to an inexorable fate. It hardly seems credible that they are diving of their own free will. One is inclined to believe that some gross monster of the deep is sucking them down into its belly in a swirl of wind and water.

Sometimes, returning from the shore, we take with us the image of a single bird at close range, and at work. I remember watching a curlew catching crabs in relatively deep water, where its long curved bill (which may reach a length of seven inches) and its long slender legs give it a certain advantage over other waders. Having caught a crab, it would peck and bully it into acquiescence. Then, holding it in the very tip of its bill, it would toss it up into its mouth and swallow it, legs and all. With a large crab it appeared to use its immense bill to impart sufficient momentum to overcome the resistance offered by the mouth! For one crab flew repeatedly backwards and forwards between the bill-tip and the mouth, until at last it disappeared from view—to reappear as a bulge in the bird's throat. Since then, on one of our trips to the river-mouth, we have seen a later stage in this little comedy—or tragedy, if your sympathies are with the crab. The curlew's throat was on this occasion already bulging with good things, as it stood by the water-side. Suddenly it disgorged a large

roundish object and, putting it down on the sand, examined it critically as much as to say, 'This is very tough. I wonder if it is worth keeping?' At that moment, however, a herring gull flew up and, driving off the curlew, pounced upon the object of their mutual interest.

Looking up an entry in an old notebook, this curlew, shall we say, that lizard or a mouse, I feel that I am retreading footsteps in the past. For the search may take me in imagination down a sandy lane, across a field to a well-remembered wood; high upon the hills or along a rocky shore. In the lane many a stile tempts me to linger; on the hill many a distant landmark bids me turn aside, while along the coast the urge to look round the next headland grows ever more insistent. But wherever my search takes me, I hurry along, intent upon the matter in hand. Yet in so doing I often feel that I am in the position of a man climbing a hill and refusing to look back, forgetting in the exhilaration of the moment the panoramic view of earth and sky and sea that stretches far behind. Nor do I care, for though one's own notes recall many a long-forgotten scene, there is a better way than this of looking back. Putting our books aside, it is only necessary to go out into the open to find in every robin, tit or bat, every snake or toad or hedgehog that one meets, a signpost pointing down the highways and byways of memory to a day now long ago.

Inevitably, therefore, on some of our visits to the coast, we return not so much with a new picture of a familiar creature, as with an old memory revived. We stop to watch a common scoter diving into the shelter of waves towering angrily above its head, and disappearing from view with the unconcern of a rabbit entering its burrow. Three-quarters of a mile from the shore the waves break over the sandbanks outside the river-mouth. Right up to

the beach they foam, while from each and every crest the wind flings back the spray. In this turmoil of water the black duck swims alone—and suddenly I recall another black duck, also alone, and a strange thing that happened to me as a boy. I see myself and another boy crawling along a ridge of shingle that runs between the sea and a brackish pool. Beside this pool a few brent-geese are standing. Gradually we creep nearer to a wild goose than either of us have ever been before. Then suddenly the only other bird in sight, the duck at sea, flies in a curve towards the shore. With one eye on the geese and most of that on the nearest bird, we watch the duck coming closer and closer, expecting it, of course, to fly past overhead. To our surprise it suddenly drops down on to the beach not many yards away. Then for several moments this extraordinary bird, a female scoter, looks us over, standing stock-still and staring in the most brazen manner possible, a question-mark in feathers. Then, with quiet deliberation, it takes itself off to the sea again. Did it recognise us as human beings? Or, not having seen us walk erect, did it mistake us for seals, which were common on that coast? I wish I knew what lay behind those puzzled eyes. For might I then not entice one of those mighty flocks ‘undulating like distant steamer smoke’ at sea? When thousands swim upon the waves, blackening the water with a living moving carpet, might I not bring them to me so that we could look at one another as fellow-mortals?

Whenever now I meet a scoter on the sea, I cannot help thinking of that duck. It may seem strange that I should have forgotten this curious bird, but at the time it still seemed to me quite an ordinary thing for a duck to do. In one’s early days the realisation comes but slowly and



with reluctance that in all the world there is not another creature so much dreaded or so cruel as man.

### III.

Every winter we raid the coast by the river-mouth, listening if only for a day to the message of our stream. Yet are we strangers in this land of geese and gannets, trippers to the sea which is for us a Mecca. I think, looking back over winters that have passed, that we are drawn there by the light. Of course we are drawn too by the glory of infinite space in sky and sea, and by the birds that one sees on the shore. But, whenever I think of the coast, I think first of its brilliance, and brilliance means colour, for the light, stronger there than inland, is intense without being hard. When the winter steals a day from the spring, and the sun is hot and the sky is cloudless, I feel as I walk by the shore that here is a new world beyond imagination clean and pure, a world perhaps waiting for man when he has learned to control the evil inventions of his miraculous mind.

Thinking of the winter brilliance and the colour of the coast, I think mainly of spring-like days when the tide is out and acres of yellow sand gleam golden in the sun. For then the red cliffs dipping into a blue sea take on a depth of colour startling on a winter's day. Then too the gulls are transfigured, so that one can hardly take one's eyes from their white breasts and delicate pearly-grey backs. On such a day, I wish for nothing better than to stand and watch a flock of herring gulls in the air, especially if there is a sprinkling of black-headed gulls in their midst, for the lesser birds look small and unusually dainty beside their large companions. At times a flock of gulls can be as overwhelming as a blaze of thrift on a Cornish headland.

The grace and beauty of the birds, the scent and colour of the flowers—surely these are sufficient for a day. Yet the temptation to turn one's glasses on to other birds is strong—nor would that matter if one had time to look at all of them, but there is rarely time. For this reason it is often better, I think, to give one's hour or one's day to a single species or a single bird, so that something may be learned or something may be seen that will never be forgotten.

The brilliance of the coast is to a large extent but the reflection of the sky upon the water. Much of its colour, however, is but the normal colour of common birds. For it must not be forgotten that inland, when the sky is overcast, birds are seen as it were through a glass darkly. On these radiant days by the sea, however, even the eyes of a bird may flash and sparkle in the sun. I can never think of our visits to the estuary without thinking of the marvellous eyes of the Slavonian grebe. This delightful bird of dabchick build is often seen along our shores in winter. Riding rather high in the water with neck held straight, it appears to be on the look-out for danger, yet it is easy to approach as it dives just beyond the breaking waves. Walking forward while the bird is under water, standing still while it is on the surface, I have often been close enough to see the reddish-orange eyes of the little bobbing figure. And on these occasions, taking up my glasses, I have never ceased to wonder at the blaze of colour from the iris, a blaze which in amount and intensity is really astonishing in a head so small. This little brown grebe that has in the winter such very white cheeks, carries indeed a flaming beacon in its head.

One happy afternoon we saw not six separate grebes as we had often done before, but a flotilla of half a dozen

drifting on the current down the river. Perhaps that look of anxiety on the sea is connected with choppy water. Anyhow, on this occasion, on an almost oily surface, there was no hint of an upraised questing neck. Rarely indeed have I seen any bird that looked so round or cobby. As they swept towards us in a compact group, their red eyes shining in the sun, there was a *splash!* and the whole lot disappeared. Swimming past us under water, they reappeared a moment later in the same formation, to float on down the swiftly flowing river out upon the ocean. There was a certain unreality in this, due in part perhaps to those amazing eyes, and in part to the birds' unusually rounded forms. Then, too, they were not so much swimming as drifting past us on a swirling watery carpet—they might have been outriders in a fairy procession not intended for human eyes.

That same afternoon we watched a common sight far out upon the sand, a sight, however, which in colour, in movement and in sound typifies the life of the shore as the winter draws on. Several small parties of oyster-catchers were feeding on a mussel-bed at the water's edge, walking sedately about in search, one supposes, of a mussel with slightly gaping shells, or of one lying upside down—the position in which it is most easily opened by the strong, flattened orange bill. In festive black and white, these amusing birds with flesh-pink legs went solemnly about their business. From time to time, however, one would raise its voice in the well-known piping call, addressing its remarks to a second bird which pretended not to hear. Eventually, however, one of these pied pipers chanced upon a kindred spirit. Whether his piping was of a quality better attuned to an oyster-catcher's ear, or whether his partner was more than usually susceptible, I do not know.

Anyhow, on this occasion the second bird, far from turning a deaf ear, actually returned the serenade and walked towards her suitor. While still some yards apart, both birds suddenly bent down their heads until their widely opened bills were nearly resting vertically on the sand. Then, in this strange position, they advanced slowly towards one another until their foreheads almost touched, whereupon, each bird moving to its right, they began to revolve in a circle together, piping loudly all the time. But before the circle was completed once, one bird began to chase the other and the duet was interrupted. Sometimes the male, far from chasing the female, seems to forget all about her. Turning this way and that and even presenting his back to the hen, he seems indeed lost to the world, enthralled in the enjoyment of his vocal powers. Often two males in a flock begin to court the same female and then, the excitement spreading, other birds join in until there is a regular 'piping party' of a dozen individuals. Long before the winter flocks break up, amorous males run about the river-mouth or stand in groups with lowered heads, piping their trilling nuptial song. These performances, fascinating to watch, are especially interesting because they seem to be on the way to becoming social functions, like the dancing of many species. Moreover, as late as July three birds are so often seen and heard together that one is also reminded of the ceremonial display—in which three birds take part—of the South American spur-winged plover. However, a pair of oyster-catchers will also pipe and posture in this comic manner when driving an intruder from their territory. As is so often the case among birds, the means of expressing the emotions are curiously limited. In bird-watching, as on other occasions, things are not always what they seem.

There is, too, a good deal more in this clownish bird than meets the eye. Pompous it may be, grotesque even, yet it is skilled in its own profession. Though its bill is the perfect weapon to drive between the two halves of a bivalve, it would be of little use in the hands of a bungler. Despite its misleading name, the oyster-catcher feeds to a large extent on mussels and on limpets. It is said on good authority to be an adept at 'smartly knocking the unsuspecting limpet from its hold.' We, however, were fortunate enough on one of our forays to see it employing a second method, into which the element of surprise hardly entered. And no doubt there are still other ways in which limpets are taken. I remember that it was a brilliant day with a nip in the air that had tempted us to wander rather far from our usual haunts. When a number of pools and seaweed-covered rocks began to appear, with here and there a horizontal slab of sandstone, smooth save for the bell-tents of limpets, three oyster-catchers flew round a headland, uttering shrill cries. Flying together, they separated on reaching their destination, and as if by magic disappeared. For here the pied plumage, which in the air or on the sand is conspicuous, tends to break up and hide the birds' outline. But through field-glasses we were able to watch them at their meal. One individual, pottering about between the pools, suddenly ran towards a limpet and bent down to push or drive its bill at the junction of rock and shell. The limpet remained firm, but directly the bird attacked it from the other side, it relaxed. Applying, perhaps, a certain amount of leverage, the oyster-catcher wrenched up the shell so that it rolled an inch or two away, whereupon its owner was removed and eaten in a couple of mouthfuls.

The other birds were similarly employed. They seemed to know almost at once which limpets were immovable,

and we saw only one unsuccessful attack prolonged. In this case the bird waited for a limpet several times hidden by waves. Probing around the edge of the shell, the oyster-catchers were evidently on the look-out for a limpet unable to make close contact with the rock, owing to some irregularity of the surface. When, however, they failed to discover a gap beneath the limpet's armour, they sometimes broke away the edges of the shell and forced an entry. Then, with no doubt a few vigorous stabs, the unfortunate mollusc was induced to relinquish all hope of a further stay in this world. After their meal, when the oyster-catchers had flown away, we collected the shells we had actually seen removed, and discovered several with freshly chipped and broken edges.

That evening, on returning home, I realised that in future not only our stream but even some of the animals in it would take my thoughts away to the coast. For, crossing the bridge that leads to our house, I saw a tiny limpet on a stone in the swiftly flowing current. I had seen it before and others too in several different places, for this dainty, fragile creature is common enough in many an English stream and river. But never before had a fresh-water limpet carried my thoughts on its back to the sea. I could not help feeling that here was a messenger from the coast, knocking at my door with news of the world as I know it along a wave-washed shore. In the summer when the tempting stream tempts no longer, I shall see these little limpets, and seeing them, forget the garden for awhile to walk in imagination amongst the oyster-catchers, the shelduck and the plover that next winter we hope to visit once again.

## A DESERT TRAGEDY.

*The witch-squaw mumbles in a lone coulee ;  
 The rye grass waves by her lone tepee.  
 Last night she heard a heron and to-day she heard a crow ;  
 The black hawk is crying where the button sages grow ;  
 The mustangs are watering at Blue Mud Springs ;  
 A coyote is howling where the dust cloud clings.  
 The witch-squaw mumbles as she pounds her camas root ;  
 The heat-waves are dancing on the top of Copper Butte.*

*In spite of her wailing he died last night—  
 Her medicine and magic and the kildeer's flight ;  
 He died last night and she knows it is too late :  
 The witch-squaw mumbles as she broods her fate.  
 Old Bat rode away before the sun arose ;  
 His pinto faded where the Texas-tommy blows.  
 The late sun is slanting on the malapi,  
 Making dreary shadows on the alkali.*

*The witch-squaw mumbles to a grave alone ;  
 The bob-cat stalks where the yellow sod is thrown.  
 A baby died before the dismal dawn—  
 Its Piute soul down the winding trail has gone ;  
 Last night she was a-beating on a buckskin drum  
 While the night-hawks whirled with their demon hum.  
 The bull-frog's chumping where the muddy waters well ;  
 The rimrocks beckon, then seem to wave farewell.*

*The witch-squaw mumbles in a lone coulee ;  
 The low wind raves by her lone tepee.*

CULLEN JONES

San Francisco.

*THE ALMOND TREE.*

BY MABEL SHELDON.

OLD SALLY had been ill all through the winter. Three months she had spent in her one dingy room in a drab house in a dreary slum, looked after by her neighbour in the room opposite, visited weekly by the parish doctor and the minister from the ugly brick chapel at the end of the road. She had borne it all patiently enough, but now towards the end of February she was fretting, and all about an almond tree.

It stood in the sooty garden overshadowed by a gasometer and a warehouse. A garden in which nothing would grow, it was the haunt of thin, skulking cats and shrill-voiced, dirty children. Every spring the pink blossom burst forth against the background of a grimy wall and showered down on fruitless soil beneath ; the one beautiful thing in a world of ugliness.

Every year, as long as she could remember, Sally had waited for it, loved it and regretted its fading, and now she would miss it. If she could only drag herself from the iron bedstead and peer through the smutty curtains over the chipped washstand she might catch a glimpse of it. But she did not lose hope that she might yet be well enough at least to look through the smeary glass at the lovely tree, until the minister suggested that she had a holiday.

A holiday ! Sally had not had such a thing for years, and here was a chance to visit the sea at the expense of the chapel holiday fund.



‘And a taxi to take you,’ the minister was saying, when Sally remembered the almond tree. If she were to go away she wouldn’t see it, not even for a minute. They would carry her downstairs and out of the front door.

‘Don’t you want to go, Sally?’ the minister was asking.

She couldn’t say she didn’t want to miss seeing the almond in blossom, so she just said, ‘I don’t know, sir.’

‘Well, think it over,’ and Sally promised she would.

Her kindly neighbour opposite said of course she must go ; so did the doctor and the rather officious chapel visitor whom Sally disliked. So there was nothing for it but to consent and to appear grateful as the officious visitor said she should.

The night before her departure, Sally lay awake staring at the moon, the glory of which even the dirty glass could not dim. The almond would be breaking into blossom now, and when she came home it would have faded. A thought flashed through her wakeful mind. Could she? Dare she? Trembling, she sat up in bed. The house was silent but for the thin wail of a baby. Stepping out of bed, she clutched the rickety dressing-table, and groped her way to the door, down the shabby stairs, and on through the damp, smelling scullery. A dog howled mournfully as she opened the door and stepped into the ugly yard magically transformed by the moonlight—and the almond tree.

It was bursting into blossom just as Sally had known it would be. Forgetting her weakness, she just gazed. This was the last time she would see it this year.

Suddenly the moon was hidden by a cloud and a vast sinking sensation seized Sally’s mind and limbs. The dismal whistle of a passing train echoed through her whirling mind. Desperately she leaned against the battered dustbin and, just as she felt she must sink into nothingness, the moon broke through once again, revealing the almond tree in all

its springtime glory, while a light breeze puffed a few fluttering petals into her lap. Sally smiled.

She was still smiling when they found her the next morning.

### JUMIÈGES.

*We took the path across the fields  
That slope down to the silver Seine,  
The landscape washed by Summer rain,  
Its distance lost in dewy haze,  
Stretch'd far and wide to meet our gaze.*

*Then rose the towers of Jumièges  
That once held sway o'er all this land.  
O jewel, destroy'd by vandal hand,  
The beauty of thy vast design  
Enchants us yet in curve and line !*

*Forgotten the artists skill'd who plann'd  
These soaring arcs and massive piers.  
Gone is the pomp of former years !  
But graceful still in slow decay  
This pious work of olden day.*

*A thousand monks divelt 'neath thy shade,  
A thousand serving men obeyed  
Thy Abbots' stern decrees.  
And princes, warriors, legates, priests  
Attended at thy stately feasts.*

*The Confessor here was wont to pray,  
Here Harold sware his crown away.  
And Lionheart came from Holy Land.  
The censers sway'd, the choirs intoned,  
The worldly for their sins atoned.*

*All dust—long dust—of no more worth  
Than drifting leaf or clod of earth !  
Now who will stay and mourn with thee  
The passing of thy pageantry ?  
What shadows haunt thy peace ?*

*Perchance in some soft wintry dusk  
Along the whispering wind doth waft  
The faint sweet perfume of the musk,  
As all embalmed in casket fine,  
The monks, with solemn rites divine,  
Entomb again the lawless heart  
Of Agnes Sorel—well beloved !—  
Or, winding through the cloister door,  
Twin sons of Clovis bear once more  
Where they shall never part.*

D. L. BOWEN.

*TERRIBLE IN ANGER.*

BY J. E. SEWELL.

LIKE most respectable husbands with small incomes, Mr. Pendleton had sometimes contemplated the murder of his wife. Not maliciously, with weed-killers or boiled fly-papers, of course ; he was no monster. But there are times, as every respectable husband with a small income knows, when things are really getting a little too much—when passionate manhood, the soaring, free spirit of independence in all of us must assert itself once and for all against domestic tyranny and injustice. At such a time, brutality and violence may reveal themselves in personalities which the world has known up to then as diffident, placatory and gentle. And if, in that terrible upsurging, the means lie to hand for murder, murder may be committed.

The day had started badly for Mr. Pendleton. Two bills had arrived by the morning's post, and they had made his eyes glint behind his spectacles. They were for underwear of a frivolous type—a type which, privately, he considered well beyond the means of the wife of a seven-pounds-a-week assistant cashier, already carrying heavy and legitimate financial burdens. He had decided, however, then and there, to say nothing about it. He detested rows at the breakfast-table. He had coughed gently as he had passed the bills over to her, that was all. He had gone on eating his eggs and bacon, perhaps a shade pointedly, but no more than a shade. And then it had started.

The sighting-shot had been a question which was also a challenge. 'I suppose you're sulking about those bills?'

she had queried. And when, with careful courtesy and dignity, he had replied that he was not sulking, she had not only contradicted him but begun to generalise on the selfishness and meanness of men who gave themselves good times without stint, yet, when their wives ventured to buy a few essentials, flew into sullen rages.

‘Look here,’ he had said, ‘do stop. I don’t care what you buy. For God’s sake don’t upset yourself. We’re nearly at the end of our tether, anyway.’

This last had been a trifle rhetorical, but the occasion had not been one for subtle distinctions. It need not have provoked what followed. And as what followed is familiar in all its essentials to all respectable husbands with small incomes, and concerns nobody but them, we may skip to the climax, which was a very pink Mr. Pendleton stabbing at the linoleum in the hall with his umbrella to emphasise that he was sick, sick, sick of it all, slamming the front door, and arriving, still shaking with temper, at the station to find that his usual train had gone without him five minutes earlier.

Walking up and down the platform, he found his anger cooling, the demon slipping back into its lair. Calmer, he found himself a little awed by the force of his own passion which had dried his throat, and now made him feel rather queasy. It came, he supposed, from his Italian grandmother, this blind fury which had possessed him so utterly. Not for the first time, he reflected, Marjorie had had a narrow escape. She would never know. To her he was just the docile breadwinner, who sometimes kicked over the traces. But supposing the row this morning had taken place in the bedroom. In the drawer of the dressing-table lay a loaded revolver. He had bought it from an ex-officer down in his luck a year or two ago, and he always kept it loaded. The

chances of a burglary at The Laburnums were not great, but the schoolboy in him had exulted in the possession of a death-dealing weapon, and it gave him a sense of security to know that it was there. Suppose the row had happened in the bedroom, and his hand had strayed towards the drawer. Suppose that, when his rage had been at its height, the demon had triumphed—oh, only for a moment!—and he had walked out of the house a free man. His eye caught a newsbill: ‘Bloomsbury Murderer At Large.’ It had been just such another crime of blind passion, he reflected, and now the police were after the wretched Dubinsky, or whatever his name was, for doing something that he couldn’t help. It was appalling to think of, but it might have happened at The Laburnums. Thank God that the row had not taken place in the bedroom.

Settling himself in the carriage, Mr. Pendleton gave himself up to a complicated reverie in which his self-respect was further enhanced by the gradual dawning of a realisation that only his iron will had prevented him, even as it was, from changing the battlefield to the bedroom and letting destiny take its course.

The day had begun badly, but worse was to follow. His lateness meant a muttered, untruthful apology to his chief, who received it with a smile and a whimsical raising of the eyebrows, more galling than a rebuke. But, in the middle of the morning, a mistaken entry was discovered, and, after an hour’s anxious research, Mr. Pendleton was forced to admit that the error was almost certainly his. The chief had been unwontedly solemn. ‘It’s a serious matter, you know, Pendleton,’ he had said. ‘You’ve been with us a long time, fortunately, and, of course, I shan’t take any action. But I don’t know what I can do about it if it happens again.’ And Mr. Pendleton had been obliged to say,

'Thank you very much, Mr. Clutterbuck. I can't think how I came to . . . of course it shan't happen again . . . thank you very much . . .' and drift miserably out of the room, in all that bitterness of soul which comes from being forgiven when one is utterly and completely in the wrong.

It was a day for brooding, and Mr. Pendleton brooded, incoherently and desperately, over a lonely teashop lunch. One of these days he would tell Clutterbuck what he thought of him, pompous little toad. Lucky for him that his subordinate had not lost his grip to-day. Suppose the revolver had been in his pocket during the interview, and Clutterbuck had been just a little more insulting. It might have happened then, in a flash. Mr. Pendleton shrugged his shoulders and got up to go. He heard his name called from another table, and looking round saw Hilton. The two had been together in the same diggings, years back. Hilton had been sent to Manchester. They had corresponded for a bit and then forgotten each other's existence.

Hilton was effusive, and Pendleton forgot his own depression in the warmth of the greeting. He had not so much changed as expanded with the years—a little more florid, more emphatic, his hair even curlier. He looked prosperous. 'Pen,' he said, 'you son of a gun, you're a sight for sore eyes. I've only been in London a couple of weeks. Very cushy job, too. Going to send for the little woman soon. Come and have a drink.'

'Can't be done,' said Mr. Pendleton regretfully; 'I'm overdue back now.'

'For crying out loud,' said Hilton, 'what's another ten minutes? But you always were a conscientious beggar. All right, then, I'll tell you what. Meet me at the Blue Post to-night at six. Hang it, we've got to celebrate.'

Mr. Pendleton hesitated. 'I'm a married man these days,' he said rather weakly.

Hilton roared with laughter. 'Good old Pen,' he shouted. 'But she won't mind—meeting an old friend and all. Anyhow, who's boss?'

'All right,' said Mr. Pendleton with sudden resolution (who was boss, anyhow?—he'd show her). 'Six at the Blue Post.'

. . . . .

It would be like old times, Mr. Pendleton reflected as he left the office that evening. Good old times, six years ago, when if you wished to stay out late you stayed out late, and nobody to ask you where you'd been. Not that Marjorie had ever asked him such a question, but then, on the few occasions that he had celebrated—an old boys' dinner or a bachelor friend's birthday—he had always given due notice, and tiptoed to bed as unobtrusively as possible. This was different. This was a firm defiance of a six-year-old habit, and Mr. Pendleton, the wounds of the morning still smarting, felt the better for it.

He pushed open the saloon-bar door, and saw Hilton in a corner with two other men. He was hailed with delight, and introduced to them. They were drinking whiskies, and Mr. Pendleton realised with a momentary qualm that the rose-cuttings he had intended to buy for the garden that week would not be bought if he stood many rounds. But that couldn't be helped. At the moment Hilton was buying the drinks, and Mr. Pendleton said 'Mine's a bitter' with a full splendid consciousness of burning his boats.

'Pen's one of my oldest friends,' Hilton explained. 'Damn' nice chap, if he is a bit on the quiet side.'

'He had to have someone to put him to bed,' Mr. Pen-



dleton riposted facetiously. And the two strangers agreed, and said they were pleased to meet him. The argument was political, and, after his third bitter, he found himself surprisingly fluent and insistent on the follies of the Socialists, a matter on which he did not feel very deeply. It was pleasant, he felt, to meet an intelligent man, who knew what was what, except in certain matters of politics, economics and finance, to counter his thrusts and produce new arguments, while Hilton put in an occasional 'Got you there, Simmy,' and the fourth of the party, a taciturn creature, would suck his pipe and say 'Ar' at intervals.

By eight o'clock, Mr. Pendleton, flushed and triumphant, had exploded to his own satisfaction the last Marxian fallacy, and his opponent looked at his watch and said he must be going. With a slight shock, he realised that if he left now he would not be home until nine-twenty, two hours late for dinner. 'I think it's time I was moving too, actually,' he said. Hilton would not hear of it.

'Nonsense, man,' he said, 'we're only just beginning. Don't take any notice of old Trotsky. I know why he's gone. I'll tell you what's wrong with him, old boy'—he lowered his voice to a pseudo-confidential undertone—'scared stiff of his wife.' Hilton's laughter bellowed out, and a grin spread round the taciturn man's pipe. Pendleton, conscious of a certain insincerity, laughed too.

'S a fact,' continued Hilton. 'Drink up and have another. Something short?'

Mr. Pendleton took gin.

'S a positive fact,' said Hilton as he returned with the drinks. 'Told me so himself. Not in so many words, mind you. But I knew. Y'see, I had a bit of bother myself, the first year.'

'You did?' Mr. Pendleton asked with polite incredulity.

‘Certainly I did,’ said Hilton complacently. ‘And I’ll tell you something else, Pen. I’ll bet you did too.’

‘Well . . . perhaps a little, just at first,’ Mr. Pendleton admitted.

‘And I’ll bet,’ proceeded Hilton, ‘you haven’t any trouble now?’

Mr. Pendleton laughed briefly and, he hoped, sardonically.

‘You see?’ Hilton turned to the other man. ‘It’s what I’ve always said. You got to be master. Got to be, see? Stands to reason there’ll be trouble first of all. I wouldn’t give a damn for a woman without a bit of spirit. But you got to tame it. Old Pen here knows. He’s been through it.’

‘Ar,’ said the man with the pipe.

Hilton was well launched. ‘I’ll tell you what it is,’ he went on, ‘we’re all friends here, I haven’t got to pick my words. You got to tame ’em. If you don’t, they’ll tame you. And then, what are you?—eh, Pen?’

Mr. Pendleton coughed.

‘Three-quarters of the misery in this world,’ went on Hilton earnestly, ‘more than that, seven-eighths of the misery in this world, are brought on by women taming men. You can see ’em in any office, with their “yes-sir”s and “no-sir”s and their “don’t-talk-to-me-I-got-to-catch-the-six-fifteen”s, poor little swine. And why is it? Ten to one their spirit’s been broken by a woman. And once that’s happened, they’re finished. Finished, see? Finished.’ And tragically, Hilton drained his glass.

They had more drinks. Mr. Pendleton felt impelled to carry the discussion further. Gravely he eyed his gin. ‘Frightful risks some women run,’ he said, shaking his head, ‘frightful risks. On and on, day by day, week by week . . . years . . . and then one day something snaps, and what

happens? Murder's what happens. Frightful risk, nagging willing horse.'

Hilton did not agree. 'They get past it,' he said. 'Finished. Might as well be dead. No spirit. As you say, month by month, year by year . . . they get past it. Bow and scrape to anybody. No good. Nothing there.'

'What about this Dubinsky?' Mr. Pendleton challenged. 'Supposed to have been married ten years. Then loses his temper one night. Phut! Cuts her throat.'

Hilton was ready. 'Foreign, y'see. Foreign. No accounting for them.'

But now Pendleton was passionately in earnest. 'Anybody could do it sometimes,' he said; and then, collecting himself cunningly, 'Anybody who was married to one of these women. It must be awful.'

'Awful,' agreed Hilton, and 'Ar' murmured the man with the pipe.

The talk drifted on to other topics, and Mr. Pendleton had more gin, not because he wanted it, but because he hated to go home. At closing-time the three men parted, the other two taking a bus crossing the river. Mr. Pendleton, on whom the night air was having a temporary exhilarating effect, decided that he would walk to Baker Street Station. The walk would sober him, and he also had a theory that by gulping down a great deal of fresh air he would be able to dispel the mixed aromas of gin and beer from his breath. He was not stupidly drunk. His legs were reliable, as he found by walking for some distance quite casually along the kerb. His speech was, he knew, rather blurred, but he could say 'The Leith police dismisseth us,' and did, several times.

But the talk and the liquor were busy in his brain. It buzzed at random across the past few hours, and fastened

firmly on Hilton's anatomy of marriage. 'Finished,' Hilton had said. 'Finished,' and drained his glass—like that. He'd had trouble at the beginning, but of course that was all over. You had to tame them. And here was he, Henry Pendleton—good old Pen, who held his liquor like a man at one time, and put his friends to bed—afraid to go home. He was seeing things clearly and ruthlessly now. Afraid to go home, let's face it. He had always been afraid—no, not afraid at first, just hating arguments and tears and more arguments. But it had become fear. A dread, a genuine dread, and what was the result? Why, Clutterbuck could kick him about the office as he chose. The human doormat. No future. None whatever. Just a slave, to be kicked and cuffed about by Clutterbucks for another twenty or thirty years, if he was lucky. Tears of self-pity welled in Mr. Pendleton's eyes.

He, Henry Pendleton, had been tamed. Oh, quite certainly tamed. He was going home for his whipping now. And he'd take it. Like a lamb, he'd take it. Or, by God, would he? Suppose that, to-night of all nights, she should unleash the demon within him—that reckless, passionate, blind demon, bred of the swift, hot Southern blood that flowed in his veins. Foreign blood. You couldn't account for it. And to-night, the quarrel would be in the bedroom. Perhaps he would be standing near the drawer. On and on, she would go, from the pillow. On and on. 'For God's sake, be quiet, woman!' On and on. The hand—not his hand, the demon's hand—would be groping in the drawer. On and on. And then . . .

Mr. Pendleton shook himself back to reality. Nothing like that would happen, of course. He was finished, and when you're finished, you've nothing left. And yet . . . He shivered with an apprehension which had in it a strange,

small measure of exultation. It wasn't impossible. But now the chill night air was doing its work. He felt sick, and weak, and very weary. Looking round, he found himself in a square with trees in it, and dimly wondered that his feet should have taken him so unerringly towards Baker Street. He must be somewhere in Bloomsbury, near the Euston Road. He would rest for a little while against the railings. He didn't think he was going to be sick, but he'd have to concentrate his will-power for a bit.

He was still concentrating when somebody said, 'Anything wrong, sir?' •

He turned and saw a policeman. This would never do. 'Nothing, officer, nothing whatever, nothing at all.' His voice was drunker than he had thought.

'You look a bit seedy,' said the policeman, 'but I wouldn't ang about, sir, if I was you.'

'No, no, officer, certainly not. Just going Baker Street.'

They moved off together. Suddenly, as they passed a street-lamp, the policeman said, 'Ere, wait a minute,' grabbed him by the arm, and shone his bull's-eye straight into Mr. Pendleton's face. 'Hullo!' said the policeman. 'What's your name?'

Mr. Pendleton struggled feebly. 'How dare you, officer, how dare you! Let me go at once. You can't arrest me like this.'

Imperturbably the policeman regarded him. 'I don't know about that,' he said slowly, 'I don't know. What's your name, anyway?'

'My name is Henry Pendleton, of The Laburnums, Hillgate Avenue, Harrow. And I warn you, officer, you can't do this. You can't. I . . . good heavens, why . . .'

The grip did not relax. 'You're not sober, you know,' said the policeman, almost gently. 'I don't want to have

to charge you for drunk and disorderly. You'd better come along to the station and talk to them there. P'r'aps I'm wrong, but you look a bit like someone we want. Anyhow, I'm not taking chances. Will you come without making a fuss? It's no use struggling, you know.'

The cold sweat was trickling down Mr. Pendleton's nose. Drunk and disorderly! The neighbours, his wife, the office! He'd lose his job. No use arguing about it. He was drunk. Not very, but drunk enough. In the policeman's grasp, he was limp and powerless. If he went quietly to the station, he could pull himself together, let them see it was all a mistake. All a mistake. 'All right, officer, I'll come,' he said. 'Can we have a cab?'

They walked together to a near-by cab-rank, the policeman holding him closely. Seated in the cab, Mr. Pendleton found his momentary panic subsiding. 'You're surely not going on with this nonsense, officer?' he said. 'I admit I've had a few drinks, and was feeling ill when you found me. But I'm quite recovered now. You know, it would be a very serious matter for me—surely you're not going on with it?' His voice was quavering, pleading.

'If you're willing to help us, you needn't worry about being charged,' said the policeman. 'But there's someone we're looking for to-night, and he's either you or somebody very much like you. If it isn't you, you'll soon be able to prove it.'

'I assure you it's an absurd mistake, officer,' said Mr. Pendleton, 'but I'll do everything I can, of course. I've committed no crime. Perhaps some unfortunate resemblance . . .'

'I expect that's it,' said the policeman gloomily. 'Still, you never know.'

At the station, Mr. Pendleton wilted afresh under the

eye of the sergeant at the desk. There was a muttered conversation, and the sergeant said, 'Looks like it,' cryptically. Then, to Mr. Pendleton, 'Your name, I believe, is Pendleton, sir? Won't you sit down?'

'Thank you, I will,' he said, and sank into a chair. Thank God, he was sober enough, now. 'There seems to be some mistake. . . .'

The sergeant spoke soothingly. 'I'm sure there is, Mr.—er—Pendleton,' he said. 'We'll clear it up in no time. Just as a formality, now, have you any papers about you for identification?'

Of course. Why hadn't he thought of that before? 'Certainly I have,' he said, and groped in his pockets. There would be a couple of letters, visiting cards, a season ticket . . . or would there? With a sinking heart, Mr. Pendleton realised that, in his tempestuous exit that morning, he had forgotten to take his pocket-book from his desk. He was known on the line, and nobody had asked to see the season ticket. He fumbled feverishly for a bit, hoping against hope that some letter had been left in a pocket. There was nothing.

'I . . . I . . . it's ridiculous,' he faltered; 'I'm afraid I haven't anything to identify me at all. You see, I rushed out in such a hurry this morning . . .'

'Quite, quite,' said the sergeant, more soothingly than ever. 'We'll just get the inspector along. I hope you won't mind waiting.' He left the room, and Mr. Pendleton was left with another policeman. The sergeant returned. 'He'll be along in ten minutes,' he said cheerfully. 'We always have to send for the inspector in charge of the case on these occasions.'

'But, tell me, who am I supposed to be?' Mr. Pendleton asked.

The sergeant looked steadily at him for a moment. 'Ever hear of a man named Dubinsky?' he asked sharply.

Mr. Pendleton sat bolt upright in his chair. 'Good God! The man who cut his wife's throat? You think I'm a murderer?'

'Now, now, sir,' said the sergeant, 'we don't think you're a murderer. We don't jump to conclusions without evidence like that. We've got our duty to do, that's all. Just a formality.'

Mr. Pendleton's brain refused to work. Murder! It was grotesque, impossible. The sergeant was still watching him—hoping he'd give himself away. But he couldn't give himself away, he'd done nothing. And to be practically accused of murder! He stared up incredulously. The sensation of being observed made him self-conscious, and he spoke with careful deliberation. 'Will you show me a photograph of the man you want?' he asked.

The sergeant went to his desk and produced a picture. 'There you are, sir,' he said. 'I think you'll see why you've been put to this inconvenience.'

Pendleton gazed bewildered at the photograph. The original had been an 'arty' camera-study of high-lights and deep shadows. In reproduction, the face, he realised, might well be his own. It had the same dark, small moustache, the large eyes and the faintly puzzled expression.

'I see what you mean, sergeant,' he said, and handed it back. 'I'll just have to establish my identity to the inspector.'

'That's all, sir,' replied the sergeant, 'just a formality.'

Miserably Mr. Pendleton waited on. Murder. Cutting a woman's throat in a rage. And for that you must see the judge put on his black cap, you must spend three weeks in a cell, closely watched, and then walk out to be hanged.



'The prisoner made a hearty breakfast.' Crowds waiting outside to see the notice go up. Silly women singing 'Abide With Me'; you might even be able to hear them. . . . He shuddered, remembering that he had himself thought that such a murder might be committed at The Laburnums. In every respect but the act, he *was* a murderer—at least, he had let himself think murderous thoughts. It was horrible, horrible. . . .

A still more acutely self-conscious Mr. Pendleton rose to greet the inspector when he arrived, courteous but business-like. 'I'm afraid I'll have to ask you a few questions, Mr. Pendleton,' he said, and drew up a chair. 'I'm sure you understand why. I don't think we shall have much trouble in clearing this up.' Mr. Pendleton said he hoped not, and then, thinking that his voice had sounded curiously guilty, repeated it, too loudly.

The interrogation began. His tongue felt swollen, and he realised that a hideous embarrassment was making him stutter in his replies. It seemed impossible, somehow, that the Inspector could believe him. And, all the time, insistent almost to the point of utterance, lay the thought at the back of his brain, the thought in which he had actually exulted earlier in the day, that he might well have been himself the murderer. At last it was finished.

'I'm very sorry, Mr. Pendleton,' said the inspector, 'but you'll appreciate that we'll have to get these details corroborated. I hope it won't take too long. It'll just be a matter of sending round to your house and asking your wife a few questions—perhaps getting along a photograph.'

They were going to tell Marjorie! She'd be terrified. He was terribly late already. 'Surely, surely that's not necessary, inspector?' he said, and then realised that the mere fact of his asking had made it more necessary than ever.

'I'm afraid it is,' the inspector said dryly. 'I hope you'll ask for anything you want while you're waiting.' He went with the sergeant into the next room, and the telephone tinkled there.

They gave him hot cocoa which he could not drink. He sat with his head in his hands and thought, while a constable busied himself behind the desk, and the clock ticked interminably. He thought of his cosy fireside, his warmed slippers and Marjorie, and he ached to be back home with her. He had loved her always—he knew that now. How could he ever have wanted to hurt her? No, it hadn't been that, quite. But he had allowed himself to dream ugly dreams, and had never recognised their ugliness till now. 'I wouldn't ever have done it, really,' he whispered to himself, again and again. 'I didn't ever want to, really.'

In his new humility, he acknowledged to himself that he was not worthy of her. What grand times they'd had together! How happy she had made him. A woman of spirit, too, not just a good housewife. How could she have been so patient with his muddling incompetence for so long? And if she had grumbled sometimes, was he not also to blame for that, with his smugness, his strutting, infantile rages?

The clock ticked on, and the papers rustled on the desk, and new, honest resolutions grew up from his self-abasement. He would know himself better in future, be more understanding, see that Marjorie's life was happier and fuller. He would work for promotion for her sake. In his mind, he had wronged her hideously, but he would make amends. She should never feel disappointed in him again.

At last the car drove up outside. Two strange policemen came in, and with them, her face white and tear-stained,

was Marjorie herself. 'Oh Harry! . . . Harry!' she whispered, and he hugged her, while the sergeant and the inspector exchanged looks and decided that they would have to go on looking for Dubinsky after all. And then Marjorie's relief turned to indignation, and she addressed herself to the sergeant and the inspector in forthright terms, until Mr. Pendleton had to intervene and point out that they had only been doing their duty. And then there were apologies, and Mr. Pendleton was given a special document proving that he was not Dubinsky, in case he was stopped again. And of course they were taken home in the police-car, and if Marjorie noticed that her husband's breath smelt strongly of gin and beer, she did not bother to mention it.

. . . . .

Not until long after the lights had been put out in the bedroom at The Laburnums did Mr. Pendleton remember the revolver. He knew, he was sure now that he would never fire it; but it was silly to leave loaded weapons lying about. Stealthily he slipped out of bed, and tiptoed to the drawer. He took out the revolver and felt for the magazine. There was not a cartridge in it. Marjorie herself must have unloaded it.

A new, clammy fear gripped Mr. Pendleton. Had she glimpsed the monstrous thoughts which had passed through his mind, and taken precautions? Her voice came sleepily from the bed. 'What are you doing?' she said.

He must know now—now that his madness was gone for ever. Obscurely he craved her forgiveness for the crime he could not confess.

'Marjorie,' he said, 'did you unload the revolver?'

Her voice was wide-awake now. 'Yes. Don't worry about it now, darling.'

'But . . . why did you?'

For a second she did not answer. Then, half-nervously, 'You'll think I'm an awful idiot, Harry. But—you see, I was afraid . . .'

'Afraid of what?' he asked, harsh in his anxiety.

'You see,' she said at last, 'I've got such a horrible temper . . . and sometimes we quarrel, and I don't mean anything, really, but there's a sort of demon gets hold of me . . . Oh Harry, I might have picked it up without realising and . . .' Her voice trailed off. 'Of course, it couldn't happen *really*, but . . .'

'Of course it couldn't, darling,' said Mr. Pendleton, sighing comfortably. 'Still, perhaps you were wise.' He put down the revolver, closed the drawer and went back to bed.

### FEAR NOT.

*Fear not, ye tender infants of the spring,  
This furious blizzard nor these swarming flakes,  
For this white garment January makes  
Is not your shroud, but shawl for christening,  
But fear the sun that comes with bridegroom's ring  
And with a princely kiss each bud awakes,  
For April then, at night turned Herod, takes  
A frosty sword and slays you slumbering.*

*And so, ye nurslings of a heavenly birth,  
Fear not when old age wreathes the head in snow,  
If your eternal root be untouched still;  
But fear when all is fair upon your earth  
The sudden stroke, the unexpected blow—  
These have the power to freeze and, freezing, kill.*

A. D. WALMSLEY.

*BY THE WAY.*

THE following very remarkable utterance by the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Lords hardly seems to have attracted the attention it deserves. After the Paymaster-General had moved, on March 10, that the Draft Unemployment Benefits Orders, as reported from the Special Orders Committee, should be approved, Lord Snell rose up and spoke as follows :

‘ My Lords, I only wish to say on behalf of my noble friends that it is not our business to be satisfied with these Orders, or pleased with the extent to which they go, but, so far as they go, we are very glad to give them our support in the hope that without too long delay further advances will be made.’

That was his whole speech : it reminds one of Kipling’s ‘ Pass the hat for your credit’s sake and pay, pay, pay ! ’ In short, it is not the business of the Labour Party—so one of its most trusted leaders declares—to do anything but hope for more. This is surely to give to the British working-man far less of a tribute to his self-respect and hatred of charity than he unquestionably deserves : it is the abnegation too of constructive criticism in the difficulties of government, a yielding up of one of the primary duties of an Opposition.

★            ★            ★

One by one, either from their own pens or from the pens of sympathetic narrators, the public has been given the life-

stories of the principal pioneers of the Labour movement : when Lord Elton publishes the promised life of Ramsay MacDonald the tale will really be complete. Of the two, biography is in some measure to be preferred to autobiography : a second person, however sympathetic, is less likely to be in the main an apologist, though against that must obviously be set a less exact knowledge of the motives and possibly of the facts also. The latest to join the company is Mary Agnes Hamilton, and though her *Arthur Henderson* (Heinemann, 15s. n.) is written with an immense enthusiasm as well as affection for her subject, who can indeed do no wrong, still it is a careful and—within the limitations imposed by enthusiasm and affection—a dispassionate study of the life-story of the man who, with Ramsay MacDonald, did more than anyone else to make a Labour Government a reality. It is an odd commentary upon political lives that, whereas at one time Ramsay MacDonald was in the wilderness and Arthur Henderson in the War Cabinet, at another the former was Prime Minister of a National Government and Henderson rallying the embittered Opposition. This bitterness, though expression of it was foreign to Henderson's big nature, is only too evident in his biographer, who does not hesitate to speak of 'the easy and indifferent lightness with which MacDonald broke old ties, and the careless contempt he showed for old associations and old loyalties' : no one who knew MacDonald well in his last years could truthfully endorse that. I can myself remember much to refute its justice. But, apart from such lapses, this is a well-documented, valuable biography of a man who throughout his life gave abundant evidence of that sturdiness of outlook, that kindly strength and that stalwart rectitude that we like to think essentially British : few have fought harder and made fewer enemies than 'Uncle Arthur,' and it is with the

character that underlay his career that his biographer is most successful.

★       ★       ★

We are perhaps a difficult people to understand : many tales of the European War go to prove it. If any foreigner has a genuine desire to understand not only some of the things we did in the War but also the spirit in which they were done, he can hardly make a better beginning than by reading *Alarms and Excursions*, by Lieut.-General Sir Tom Bridges (Longmans, 12s. 6d. n.). Regular readers of the CORNHILL will no doubt remember that graphic story of St. Quentin at the start of the Retreat in 1914 written by Col. W. W. Jelf and entitled 'The Master Hand' : here it is. There was no concealment amongst soldiers that the hero of that episode was Tom Bridges, and it is told here simply and modestly in the first person. That is not all that is told : Mr. Winston Churchill, in a Foreword which is generous, as the author and he have not always agreed, calls the autobiography 'this gay story of grim events' : it is that, but it is much more. Tom Bridges is not merely a gay and gallant soldier covered with wounds and quips ; of such—happily—our Army was never short ; he was in addition a fine Commander and also a skilled negotiator and ambassador—he became, for instance, in his own cheery phrase, 'Head House Maid to the Near East' throughout those very difficult months following on the Armistice, and he was much else besides, not least in the United States with Balfour and also Reading. He tells his life-story, from early days in India to his Governorship of South Australia, with simplicity, modesty, and unfailing gaiety : the book is crowded with stories, some good, some very good, and some more even than that : the story of the rescue of Minoru and Aboyeur from Russia is of one kind, that of the rescue of the Emperor

Karl and his wife by a British major another. It is, in brief, an extraordinarily interesting as well as entertaining record of a splendid career—one of the very best autobiographies yet produced by the War.

\*     \*     \*

One of the most striking phenomena about modern literature is the number of women-writers, young and old—but mostly young, sometimes very young—who give to the reading public a very excellent first novel. What is almost as striking is the diminution of that excellence as novel succeeds novel: those who proceed from excellence to established renown are but a small fraction of those whose progress is downhill. The truth of this will, I fancy, not be denied by anyone tolerably familiar with the fictional output of to-day, and it is perhaps depressing. But a small fraction do proceed upwards, and of these it is to be expected, at any rate very cordially hoped, that Miss Olivia Daniell will be one. Her publishers (Constable) state that they believe her first novel, *The Road from Jericho* (7s. 6d. n.), ‘to be a performance of quite unusual quality’: publishers’ beliefs are taken often, and often unjustly, *cum grano salis*; I feel that in this particular case they will not be—beyond any doubt this novel is ‘of quite unusual quality.’ Its story is simple and yet unusual; it is told elusively, occasionally almost too elusively perhaps, but with an unusual feeling for atmosphere and for beauty. There are but three characters who really count, Mirella, Stephen, and Ralph—though Janet, the Hentys, and Miss Charteris all make decided contributions: the eternal triangle once more, thinks the reader—wrongly: it is a triangle, but one with novelty and charm. The title is, like the book, elusive, and that in a title is a mistake: throughout these pages runs quietly, yet pervad-



ingly, the appeal of two loved Scottish properties, Minyeeve and Byvie, water and the hills of Galloway—and the dogs. For a first novel the assurance of the writing is really notable : I greatly trust that Miss Daniell will have, and continue to have, the success that in this novel her work deserves.

Another woman's first novel, *Lottery Luck*, by L. Reve Jackson (Cassell, 7s. 6d. n.), also well deserves attention. The story is told in a slightly disjointed fashion and the brevity of many sentences is characteristic of the staccato style, but the story itself is both attractive and out of the ordinary : the old idea of wealth suddenly descending on a household is given quite a new turn by the household being that of two elderly French people running a hotel in the South of France : Julie, Antoine, Louise, Marie and her baby Juliette are all dexterously and lightly sketched. There is a villain, there is drama, there is happiness. A very pleasant and creditable piece of work for a new writer.

\*            \*            \*

There must come a day, I suppose, when every possible way of 'bumping off' undesirables has been utilised by our ingenious creators of detective fiction ; but that does not seem yet to have arrived. I have not read, I am sorry to say, Miss Josephine Bell's first two stories of murder—I must clearly amend my deficiencies, for her third, *Fall Over Cliff* (Longmans, 7s. 6d. n.), is exceedingly good, and, which is perhaps even rarer, has an originality of plan. Unless the reader quickly acquires confidence in the author's ingenuity (but that he assuredly does) it all proceeds so obviously as almost to be unentertaining, but the confidence that it will not turn out to be at all obvious is not misplaced ; and, apart from that—and to say more would be unfair—there is one of the neatest little ends (concerned, it is true, with a detail only, but we all know the importance of detail in

murder cases) that I can remember to have come across. It sent me back at once to the early pages : I am not quite, quite sure that at the end of one sentence in the book Miss Bell is absolutely fair—but that is a matter, no doubt, of argument, and the doubt increases the interest and the admiration. But, delightful as is the domestic menage of the Wintringhams—one of the few couples in modern fiction who are genuinely in love with one another—Miss Bell must, I think, take care that she does not overdo the contrast between playfulness and murder. By any standard, however, an unusually good detective story.

★           ★           ★

Dr. L. P. Jacks is a man of distinction as educationist, editor, and author : in this last capacity he has now written a novel which is, so the reader is told by the publisher (Methuen), a return ' to the vein of allegorical story-telling of two earlier books ' : these, unfortunately, I have not read. Perhaps, if I had, I should quickly have understood, if not the whole of the inner meaning, at any rate the outward intention of *The Stolen Sword* (6s. n.) : as it is, handicapped by unfamiliarity, I have to confess myself defeated. It is, we are also told, in some measure autobiographical—that is perplexing : ' but something is also offered to those who can read between the lines.' It may be so, but it would appear to be meant for the specialist. It is a very queer and, to all intents and purposes, disconnected and indeed uncompleted tale : one reader at all events would like to know what attitude it is suggested ought to have been adopted by the police after the return of Loo and the narrator from the dropping of the coffin (and the Sword) into the sea. Allegorical ? Possibly : this ' tale of an unbroken covenant ' remains a matter for speculation and conjecture.

G.

## THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

## DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 175.

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answers, containing the coupon from page iv, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach him by 30th May.

'In ——— she ——— to walk forlorn,  
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn'

1. 'And pardon that thy ——— should be sung  
Even into thine own soft-conchèd ear ;'
2. 'I warm'd both hands before the fire of ———,'
3. 'O thou, that dear and happy Isle  
The garden of the world ———,  
Thou Paradise of the four seas  
Which Heaven planted us to please,'
4. 'Beneath those rugged ———s, that yew tree's shade  
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,'
5. 'When we too ———  
In silence and tears,'

Answer to Acrostic 173, March number : 'With *claret* and *sherry*,  
theorbo and voice !' (Thomas Jordan : 'Coronemus nos Rosis antequam marcesant'). 1. *CreatureS* (Wordsworth : 'Ode'). 2. *LotH* (Keats : 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'). 3. *AwakE* (William Allingham : 'The Fairies'). 4. *RiveR* (E. B. Browning : 'A Musical Instrument'). 5. *EveR* (Wordsworth : 'The Solitary Reaper'). 6. *TheY* (Shelley : 'Music, when Soft Voices die').

The first correct answers opened were sent by Mrs. Owen, Green Hall, Carmarthen, and 'Mrs. Carré,' Brant Cottage, Osmington Mills, Weymouth, who are invited to choose books, as mentioned above.  
N.B.—*Sources need not be given.*

THE  
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

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JUNE 1938.

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EDITH WHARTON.

BY ROBERT SENCOURT.

THE genius of Edith Wharton came slowly to fruition. Though she had published a short story before she was thirty, several more years went by before she brought out her first book, and she had taken time to learn her work, since those days when, as little Pussy Jones, she had avowed that her chief ambition was to follow her mother in being the best-dressed woman in New York. Ripeness, we might say, was all to her : for it was the completion of her huge energies to be thorough : she must therefore have risen to greatness in any walk of life. She was a woman of temperament, and far preferred the society of men. These surrounded her with an atmosphere of romantic admiration till the last days of her life. Always eager for fresh encounters with young minds, and the discovery of new talent, she was yet remarkably faithful to the Victorian classics, as well as to a little circle of friends, and of these most had come, like herself, from America to make their homes in Europe. Although she refused to waste her time on social acquaintances, she had the instincts of the *grande dame*, and dispensed to the guests she chose the most finished hospitality. Her servants stayed with her for decades, and worshipped her into a certain subjection to themselves. Her cooks were always excellent, and her wines exceptionally choice. The appointments of her table were faultless, and the decoration and arrangements of her houses, the Pavillon Colombe at St. Brice-sous-Forêt, and Ste. Claire-le-Château at Hyères, made each room into a picture, while each was also most

comfortable to live in. The latest books and reviews showed at once a mind that knew at once how to make its selection, while her library was that of a scholar. But if her house came to a perfect rightness by its mingling of sumptuousness with simplicity, and both with comfort, not less admirable in their success were the vistas of her garden, where the profusion of flowers would fit themselves into a background of effect with building, and gradually lose themselves in trees or stretch of view. She added a man's strength to the sympathy and solicitude of a woman, and a man's organising power to a woman's interest in dress and *décor*. Her intellectual interests never distracted her attention from homely details, and her manners and tastes were simple. Yet there was no writer of her time who lived in better society. She knew, of course, the writers from Aldous Huxley to Paul Bourget, from Paul Valéry to Barrie or Basil King. She was often with Americans of position, like Madame Balsan, and Lady (Alan) Johnstone. She was received in the most exclusive circles of French and English society, and called the sons of princes by their Christian names. But her closest friends, though highly cultured, had not names widely known and with them she kept in touch with the America of her youth. She was of warm heart, strong feelings, regular habits, tireless enterprise, and above all, of will. Though her interests were wide, her memory was tenacious, and exact, and her judgment singularly happy.

Born of an American family of assured position, fortune had favoured her, and though she was not at first rich, the rise of land values had made her private resources ample, even had she not been able to add to them by the successes of her plays and books. But although so highly gifted in mind and fortune, she suffered much. She was married young to a man who was never quite an intellectual com-

panion for her, and afterwards became a neurasthenic. He could neither give her intellectual sympathy nor satisfy her heart, and she attached herself with all the strength and ardour of her nature to another, the judge and lawyer, Walter Berry. Living in that high level of American society which looks on divorce as vulgar, she finally divorced her husband, and all believed that this was done with the intention of marrying the man she admired. But she did not remarry. Walter Berry had given her intellectual sympathy, but he amused himself with younger women, and in her heart Mrs. Wharton knew he was unworthy of her. Finally, he and her husband died in the same year. Her own life reeled under the shock, but she recovered to produce in the last twelve years of her life much of her best work; for unless in *Ethan Frome* and *Artemis to Actæon*, she never produced better work than in her *Twelve Poems*, in the short stories she called *Certain People*, or *Human Nature*; and her autobiography, *A Backward Glance* will live for ever in the history of American Literature. It is the finished record of her fine taste and sense as traveller, as connoisseur, and as woman of the world; its background is not Europe, but New York as seen and known by a family who, even if not wealthy, counted in the days when America, though not compromising its own individuality, enriched its culture by keeping it close to that of Europe. But Mrs. Wharton's standards were incorrigibly European. She had much less in common with the Joneses than with the handsome young English tutor who taught her brothers before she was born. Good tone mattered so much to her that for the last twenty years of her life she felt more at home in Europe than in New York; she felt that America was running away from the things which she, when a young American, had cherished as the best of its heritage. Yet she

never lost touch with the United States, and her last long novel is the vivid story of a young writer who comes out of the Middle West, and never comes very near to the life, nor the successes, which Mrs. Wharton herself richly enjoyed. This novel, *Hudson River Bracketed*, tells much about her real life, while *A Backward Glance* tells more of her tastes than of the life she actually lived with her closest friends.

The giant display of energy when over seventy was more than even her strong system could stand. In 1936 she had a stroke of paralysis and was seriously ill—in the spring of 1937 another stroke made her life still more precarious, and after managing the move from Hyères to St. Brice, she died on August 11th in her home, near Paris, the Pavillon Colombe. In those failing months she was cared for by an Italian friend, Mrs. Royall Tyler, whom she made her executrix and to whom she left her Château at Hyères. And it was fitting end to her long loyalty to European tradition that the parish priest at St. Brice should finally have commended her to eternity.

## II.

To the world who did not know her in her completeness, she was put down as a great novelist: and certainly as a novelist she deserved a reputation, and enjoyed success. Her first big novel was *The Valley of Decision*, published in 1902; but she became more popular as a novelist twelve to twenty years later, her popular successes being *The Custom of the Country*, *The Age of Innocence*, *The Children* and *Twilight Sleep*. But these were not really her finest work. The one novel which all acclaim is *Ethan Frome*, which was published in 1911. The style is there as perfect as the characters are vivid, the description haunting and the narrative arresting. This book is almost as telling in its own way as *The Scarlet*

*Letter*, and the subject is not dissimilar. But where there the fancy is luxuriant, here there is the beauty of frosty starlight and snow. The subject was to haunt Mrs. Wharton for the rest of her life, the subject of adultery, or rather of the moral struggle against passion when a marriage, in itself unsatisfying, has put the new love against the law. This preoccupation was soon remarked, and she herself relates in her autobiography that a correspondent wrote to her, 'If you ever have known a respectable woman, for heaven's sake write about her.' At the same time, she notes also that, as the years went on, she was considered by many young Americans to be prudish. She was indeed far from ever tolerating a taste for what she herself once called 'dirt for dirt's sake.' Her instincts were moral, conservative and, as the years went on, she felt that the spiritual tradition of the Church was essential to the background of civilisation both in culture and common sense. It was typical of her that one of her homes should have been built for the mistress of a sovereign, and the other had been a crusader castle before it was a convent.

A preoccupation with the old conflict in her heart remained. As a woman she never grew old. Fine as her sense was of the ironies of life, especially as they made themselves felt in certain crucial instances, she ended as she began, sympathetic, delicate and passionate. Others, besides Walter Berry, had disappointed her; but she cared eagerly for men almost to the last. She knew what she wanted out of life, and she wanted much, but not more than she knew how to attain—companionship, amplitude, social rank, all associated with culture, with the expression and development of herself in her beautiful houses, and all these subordinate to her life and career as a writer, commanding the respect of continents and leaving a legacy to time. She had the tastes of a scholar



and a scholar's relentless passion for accuracy of detail : indeed, there were times when she seemed like the perfect pupil of the perfect governess : but this obedience to learning's discipline was the freedom of her fineness ; it was due to her sense of nuance ; she had what Dante called the habit of art : a developed dexterity which answered to a refined instinct for beauty. The soul of a poet lived eager to the end in the efficiency, the knowledge of society, the control of position and the widely cultivated taste of this ever-completer woman of the world. The best brains of Europe were at home with her. But she chose friends that were 'far from the dust and rumbling,' and history will know few of their names. She prized above all exquisiteness of finish, without ever being weakened by this choice, or allowing it to alter either her long faithfulness or her enjoyment of adventure.

### III.

In Cyprus, and in Morocco, she found materials for such excellent writing that we can imagine her enjoyment of her journeys in Spain, or her last visits to Rome. And in one sense she still remains to be discovered. For it is not only as the creator of *Ethan Frome*, as the most excellent of her novels, that she will find a place in the studies of unborn professors of Literature. In *Morocco* shows her to be one of the most brilliant picturers of the Moslem world ; there she has written a travel-book that deserves to be cited with *Eothen* or *Monasteries of the Levant*. In *The Writing of Fiction* she produced a masterpiece of criticism, a book of the highest importance among studies of the novel : a book which her biographer, Mr. Percy Lubbock, recognised as excelling his own *Craft of Fiction*. She produced another classic of description in *Italian Gardens*, and among con-

siderable writers she was the first to publish an appreciation of Rome's baroque architecture.

But her finest work is other than these, and even less widely known. It is her poems, and of these the finest, both in the complex texture of their expression, their range of imagery, their fine base of thought, their intensity of passion, and their austerity of calm, are the sonnets of *The Mortal Lease*. Their qualities evoke the memory of *Modern Love*, and almost of the sonnets of Donne and Michelangelo.

*'Because the currents of our love are poured  
Through the slow welter of the primal flood  
From some blind source of monster haunted mind,  
And flung together by random forces, stored  
Ere the vast void with rushing worlds was scored,—  
Shall we deny . . .  
The stubborn questing for a phantom shore ?'*

That is the opening question, and she elaborates it in the succeeding sonnet :

*'Shall we forego the deeper touch of awe  
On love's extremest pinnacle, where we  
Winging the vistas of infinity  
Gigantic on the mist our shadows saw ?'*

She had within her the blood of 'the wild woodland woman,' the nymph beside Ilyssus, the entranced nun, and wished to dance her life out in one moment of primeval silence and primeval intimacy in tides of trembling light. But is the most exalted experience of passionate communion enough to satisfy the heart of man ? No, she answers, this is not enough. We sense the fulfilment of the promise in the words that utter it ; we taste the joy of a desired presence when an instinctive sense tells us already of the touch of silent fingers on the latch. The most eager joys of the pulse when rapture directs the battle between conquest and

surrender : these joys of passion are less than deprivation gives :

*'Not thou, vain moment ! Something more than thou  
Shall write the score of what mine eyes have wept,  
The touch of kisses that have missed my brow,  
The murmur of wings that brushed me while I slept,  
And some mute angel in the breast even now  
Measures my loss by all that I have kept.'*

That told what Browne had called 'the proper tenure by which we have the earth,' that was the mortal lease. Patience through pain, grief that becomes that helpmeet of the heart, the calm and waiting while tragedy unfolds a secret more august, here was the power of what a Christian would have called The Cross. In depths of the heart too dark for her to see all clear Edith Wharton had accepted it. Her feelings might be too eager to acquiesce in silence, but her will was one with the law of the universe which had been implicit in her suffering. What relief she found came to her both in the other developments of life, and in suiting her strength to her exquisiteness in the sharp etchings, where words mingled imagination with experience. But grief remained, and as she insisted, will be served apart 'with uncommunicable rites, and still surrender of the undivided heart.'

Mrs. Wharton particularly prized the poem she calls 'Life' : and there are some fine lines in it, but it is not original nor forceful enough. She was not always the best judge of her own work, and as some mothers in their defensive instinct praise most their most unworthy children, she was inclined to invite attention to her less meritorious work. She has related how she welcomed criticism, and, at the age of sixty-seven, thanked a young English writer for advising her to delete several pages from the opening of *Hudson*

*River Bracketed*, and acted on the advice. Yet some thirty years earlier when Mr. Charles Scribner in accepting a novel had ventured the opinion that it might have been shorter, she silently transferred her business to another publisher. Mr. Scribner thought to the end she had been lured by more attractive terms. It was not so. She was always grieved that no one bothered about *A Son at the Front* among her novels, a forced and ineffective war story, written by one who did not understand the trenches, and she used to insist that *Summer* was really a better work than *Ethan Frome*. She was touched with the welcome to her autobiography, and said she felt it necessary to correct false impressions. But there is much of her life of which one can see nothing by following *A Backward Glance*, and some of her friends thought that this book was designed to throw sleuth-hounds off the scent.

Two of her most effective pieces, and she knew it, were her dramatic monologues, *Vesalius in Zante* and *Margaret of Cortona*. Vesalius, who died at Zante in 1564, had been the great anatomist at the University of Padua, but gave up his chair in time of difficulty to become the court physician of Charles V. There are some memorable lines in this poem, the tribute, for example, to St. Ignatius Loyola :

*What he willed, he willed,  
As those do that forerun the wheel of fate,  
Not take their dust—that force the virgin hours,  
Hew life into the likeness of themselves  
And wrest the stars from their concurrences.  
For who rules now? The twilight-flitting monk,  
Or I, that took the morning like an Alp.*

The last line is of course an echo from *Cenone* :

‘Gargantua . . .  
Stands up and takes the morning.’

And no doubt Mrs. Wharton was haunted by her careful reading of Browning and Tennyson. She had no wish to break with tradition, and though she admired the best of Whitman, and especially *Voyage to India*, she much preferred to discipline herself to the rules of blank verse. The model of Browning can be felt in many lines of *Margaret of Cortona*, but the passion there is Edith Wharton's own, the passion which culminates with the end of the poem. Mrs. Wharton takes a legend, not accepted by the authorities, that St. Margaret was at first saved from the streets, by the man who certainly made her only his mistress; it was not till after his death that she became a nun. These are the closing lines:

‘ If ever prayer hath ravished me so high  
 That its wings failed and dropped me in thy heart,  
 Christ, I adjure Thee! By that naked hour  
 Of innermost commixture, when my soul  
 Contained Thee, as the paten holds the host,  
 Judge Thou alone between this priest and me.  
 Nay, rather, Lord, between my past and present  
 Thy Margaret's and that other's—whose she is  
 By right of salvage—and whose call should follow?  
 Thine? Silent still.—Or his who stooped to her,  
 And drew her to Thee by the bands of Love?  
 Not thine? then his?

Ah Christ—the thorn-crowned Head  
 Bends . . . bends again . . . down on your knees  
 Fra Paolo!  
 If his then Thine!

Kneel, priest, for this is heaven?

Browning could not have written this passage, but he would not have disdained it, and it has a deeper significance, with not less dramatic points than *Romney's Remorse*. In *Moonrise over Tyringham* and *All Saints* she comes nearest to Herbert

Trench. Very moving are the stanzas in the latter poem in which she in her way suggests that all the days and nights of Shramandazi are not worth an hour of yonder sun :

Does the heart, she asks,

[illegible]

*Was there in the narrow range of living,  
After all the wider scope?  
In the old, old rapture of forgiving,  
In the long, long flight of hope?'*

She could sometimes be extraordinarily successful in simple lyric effects : as for example in one stanza she wrote in her maturest years on heart disease :

*'Death touched me where your head had lain,  
What other spot could he have found  
So tender to receive a wound,  
So versed in all the arts of pain?'*

And during the War she wrote a remarkably successful poem, *The Tryst*; it is a dialogue with a woman whose house has been destroyed by the invaders :

' I said *What look have your houses there  
And the rivers that glass your sky ?  
Do the steeples that call your people to prayer  
Lift fretted fronts to the silver air,  
And the stones of your streets are they washed and fair  
When the Sunday folk go by ?*

*My house is ill to find, she said,  
For it has no roof but the sky ;  
The tongue is torn from the steeple head,*

*The streets are foul with the stains of the dead,  
And all the rivers run poison red  
With the bodies drifting by . . .*

*I said there are countries far from here  
Where the friendly church bells call,  
And fields where the rivers run cool and clear,  
And streets where the weary may walk without fear,  
And a quiet bed, with a green tree near,  
To sleep at the end of it all.*

*She answered : Your land is too remote  
And what if I chanced to roam  
When the bells fly back to the steeple throat,  
And the sky with banners is all afloat,  
And the streets of my city look like a boat  
With the tramp of her men come home ? . . .*

*I shall crouch by the door till the bolt is down  
And then go in to my dead.'*

Yet that poem is not more telling in its voice of sympathy for the poor than the first story Mrs. Wharton published in *Scribner's Magazine* in the early nineties : *Mrs. Manstey's View*. It was just a sketch of an old lady, who had once been to Europe and always wanted to live in the country. And this old lady died of a broken heart in a boarding-house in New York because a neighbour was going to build an extension which cut out her view. But it was so finely done, so touching, that it might almost have been written by Maupassant : its close is a fine example of the style in which Mrs. Wharton was to write for another five and forty years :

‘She tried to make them open the window, but they would not understand. If she could have tasted the air, sweet with the penetrating ailanthus savor, it would have eased her : but the view at least was there, the spire was golden now, the heavens had warmed from pearl to blue,

day was alight from East to West, even the magnolia had caught the sun.

‘Mrs. Manstey’s head fell back, and smiling she died.

‘That day the building of the extension was resumed.’

It was always just in that way that Mrs. Wharton wrote her best stories. As neat as O. Henry, with that fine simplicity of phrase in which her friend Henry James had written his early masterpieces, and with that touch of grimness which she shared with Hardy, and added to these a certain intimacy and delicacy which showed it was the woman’s heart which counted suffering in terms of tiny things, her style sparkled from time to time with phrases of delicate expressiveness all her own :

‘Orion flashed his cold fires.’ ‘Their eyes met and clung together desolately.’ ‘They flew on through the dusk, gathering smoothness and speed as they went, with the hollow night opening out before them and the air singing by like an organ.’ ‘My heart tightened at the thought of the hard compulsions of the poor.’

These odd phrases from *Ethan Frome* are index enough of her sense of style, and her art in attaining it. But for the masterpiece to be complete, she needed either full romance or else some crucial experience in a primitive setting. For America aroused her irony as Europe could not do, and without that irony she was never sure of her tragic effects. For this reason, *The House of Mirth* is a much greater book than *The Valley of Decision*. But Mrs. Wharton did not altogether enjoy her cruelly vivid sense of a certain deficiency among the class-emancipated crowds of the United States ; to her Europe had something of the strangeness and romance which the Wild West of Cowboys and Red Indians had for the English schoolboy of forty or fifty years ago. She could describe Europe to perfection as in *Italian Villas, Italian*



*Backgrounds* or *A Motor Flight through France*, but, though she never felt that grudge against it which Henry James revealed in *The American* or *An International Episode*, it was evidently not so entirely grown into her inner consciousness that she could use it as imaginative material in the way she uses certain aspects, and not the most elegant aspects, of the United States. As a writer of stories, she forfeits her finished cosmopolitanism—when she is classical she is American. And her European stories stand in comparison to her American ones as *The Marble Faun* stands to *The House of the Seven Gables*. She respected Europe too much to satirise it : and though she had always lived on an elevation, she could—like Lady Russell, or Miss Sackville-West—write with a peculiar vividness of the middle-class lives in which she could never have contemplated mixing.

#### IV.

For Mrs. Wharton made all her choices well. There is one memorial of them in *The Book of the Homeless*, a book she edited and published in 1915 to collect money for the Belgian refugees. She had founded in November, 1914, a Relief Committee for the Children of Flanders. In the following April the Belgian Government asked her to take charge of some six hundred and fifty children and a number of helpless old men and women from ruined towns and farms. To help them, she asked a number of distinguished people to contribute to a book. The list of contributors is an index of her position among the writers of France and England : Maurice Barrès, Laurence Binyon, Paul Bourget, Rupert Brooke, Paul Claudel, Jean Cocteau, Joseph Conrad, Gosse, Hardy, Paul Hervieu, William Dean Howells, Henry James, Francis Jammes, Maeterlinck, Alice Meynell, Paul Elmer More, the Comtesse de Noailles, Agnes Repplier,

Henri de Regnier, Edmond Rostand, George Santayana, Herbert Trench, Verhaeren, Mrs. Humphry Ward, Margaret L. Woods and W. B. Yeats ; there were also Igor Stravinski and Vincent d'Indy ; it was introduced by Joffre and Theodore Roosevelt, it was illustrated by Max Beerbohm, Jacques-Emile Blanche, Charles Dana Gibson, Claude Monet, Renoir, Rodin and Sargent. Yet among all the contributions from these shining names, none can really be said to surpass the contribution made by Mrs. Wharton herself ; it is the verse dialogue already quoted, *The Tryst*.

Mrs. Wharton was decorated by the Governments of both France and Belgium. She had the Grand Cross of the Order of Leopold, and was an Officier of the Legion of Honour. She enjoyed an equal prestige both in the Académie Française and in the Faubourg St. Germain.

In the course of war work, she wished to obtain a permit to travel from Paris to London, and went to a British diplomat whom she had often met in society. He told her it was impossible. 'I could not give it to you, Mrs. Wharton,' he said finally, 'not if you were a Duchess.' Mrs. Wharton did not forget the remark ; and she was not surprised to learn that at a later juncture of history when crowns were falling, this diplomat showed a Queen a lack of courtesy which made his name mud among the royalties of Europe. But what could be expected of a man who was so gauche as to compare her invidiously with a Duchess ? Mrs. Wharton had not been nonplussed by him, however. 'I went on,' she said, 'to Lord Granville, and although I had never met him before he gave me the permit at once.'

A French or English ear could detect at once that Mrs. Wharton was an American ; she had never been unusually beautiful ; nor was she particularly witty as a talker. But brilliance and distinction were her natural *milieu*, and with

them womanliness. She had no need to suit herself to sets or fashions. There was in Western Europe a certain cosmopolitan society where, whether they were celebrities, or whether Print had never noted them, everybody was well bred, everybody had brains, everybody had taste. It was one of the most delightful circles in the world. Although she never scrupled to go beyond it—and put up with some successful American women, or some handsome European men—it was in this society that Mrs. Wharton moved at her choice, with an authority that was never asserted, and never questioned. Here her subtlety was appreciated ; here warmth of heart was understood ; here there was always room for choice and enterprise ; and yet, even though she paid visits from time to time, and entertained so beautifully, and was so well the creative mistress of her homes and servants, her power of decision gave her that amount of solitude which enabled her to produce around the age of seventy works which complete the tale of those which mark their creator as unique among the women of America ; she takes precedence of all who went before her in the unity of her finish, and her wholeness with her rightness.

## AN IDYLL.

BY THE REV. P. B. CLAYTON.

*Readers who have preserved a state of ignorance about Toc H may well find this narrative of fact vexatious or confused. May it be prefaced by the explanation that All Hallows-by-the-Tower is the Guild Church of Toc H, a Movement which emerged from Talbot House in Poperinghe? The membership to-day is happily diverse in age and in denominational allegiance. Most of the men are young; they are concerned mainly with social service of many descriptions in their neighbourhood. The Old Guild Church, famous among much else for silvered gilt plate of the time of Laud, affords an anchorage acceptable to many thousands of Toc H to-day. What follows tells the story of two pattens bestowed upon the Treasury of the Church some years ago. The tale has remained unprinted, until both sisters have departed this life, most truly in His fear and His favour.*

ONE autumn afternoon a very fine old lady, like a rheumatic grenadier, in a stiff alpaca habit, came out of Mark Lane Station and started to cross Byward Street. There is a brood of minatory cabs which are permitted to come to rest at this spot, dividing the roadway as the caisson of an uncompleted bridge will stem and separate a stream. Commending her soul to God, and her body to the adventure, the very old lady stepped from the granite kerb into the tide-race of the street. She gained the cabs, and took breath. Encouraged, she dived again. . . . It was really no one's fault; and, since no final mischief came to her, the stumbling run which brought her to the gutter on the desired side

passed unobserved. She picked herself up, gathered a black reticule to her, and gained the further pavement as a spent swimmer gains a landing-stage.

Before her stood a City Church's doorway, unencumbered by any adhesion of humanity. Yet folk came in and out, and seemed no worse for their experience. She wondered whether this was indeed her goal. Consulting the letter open in her hand, she read with undimmed eyes 'All Hallows Porch Room,' and then observed that, at the very corner she had reached, a sign swung out, brave with a gay device creaking on twisted iron. Beneath it yawned a second similar doorway, and round the lintel ran a scroll which read 'Abandon Rank all ye who enter here.' The motto had no meaning in itself, but yet the indication was propitious. It savoured of her nephew, seen seldom during these forty years of recent history. She stepped inside, and found a few dark stairs.

These won, she found herself within a room, one wall of which was plainly medieval. Her artist's eye observed a grille of iron over a chamfered window, both of indubitable antiquity. The room itself seemed like a long and overcrowded office; where work was often tempered by the fellowship of friends and strangers. It only held four people when she entered, three of them young grown-ups. There was a long-limbed undergraduate, not taking life too seriously; and a rheumatic veteran, whose movements were staccato. The last replaced the kettle on an electric stove, which lay upon its back reluctantly. On a small square table a battered teapot sat like a hen brooding among some still more battered crockery. At the two desks were two harassed workers; one (as the old lady learnt) went by the name of Margaret, and meant to get things done. The other, a Napoleon seated beneath a hat-rack, was playing a species

of double dummy, with a pile of letters for his cards and rubber stamps for counters.

Pizzey—the jerky veteran—deposited the kettle, and came to welcome my long-distance relative. Where was the Vicar then? He was not far away, Pizzey informed her; in fact, he was believed to be chin-wagging with a firm of lightermen, who had constructed a new form of alms-box out of a stout old barrel. He would be back quite soon. Here Pizzey, with a taste in panaceas, suggested tea, which was waiting. The fine old lady was now ushered to a much-sat-on sofa, with folded rugs at one end of it, suggesting a spare bed in frequent use. She sat upright, her rescued reticule keeping her company, and a cracked cup—but not so cracked as others—was handed to her.

The men all saw the mud disfiguring her skirts, but did not like to mention it. Margaret had no such scruple. She guessed, and guessed the truth. So, a few moments later, the sofa was abandoned for a chair set upright before the stove, and Margaret wiped and scraped, while Pizzey stood on guard holding the office clothes-brush, with his well-drilled back towards these delicate proceedings. When I came in at last, this was the scene I saw. Pizzey need not have blushed. Great ladies of her epoch were born before the finicking period when ladies had no legs. My relative had drawn up her skirts to her old knees, and a tremendous petticoat was (*honi soit*) revealed.

She called me ‘cousin’ briefly, and went on to explain that she was getting old. Her sister was positively feeble. They felt the time had come for handing on some heirlooms. They had agreed that it would be appropriate that I, the only Vicar in the family, should have the Church plate for All Hallows Parish. ‘Church plate,’ I interjected: ‘what Church did it belong to?’ My family has not made

many contributions to Crockford down the ages, but I hoped at least they had not stolen chalices.

My cousin now unfolded what was to her a very recent tragedy. 'My dear, my poor great-uncle !' I was made mute by this ; I did not know his name. 'My poor great-uncle Thomas died off the coast of Spain.'

I simulated sorrow, and asked when this had happened.

'He was at sea, of course, sharing in the blockade. He was, you know, a Captain in the Royal Navy, and did well in the War.'

I still was mystified. Visions of some quaint Q boat, under a stern old salt, welled upwards in my fancy ; but I had never heard of his demise.

'When was all this ?' I asked ; and the old lady answered : 'It was some time ago—I get dates confused. But, as a girl, my parents told me to remain proud of him. It was a shock to them. Great-uncle Thomas died off the coast of Spain in 1787.'

My brain went reeling round. Here was a feat of feminine fidelity which leapt our little day, and dropped a niece's tear upon the coralled bones of one of Nelson's Captains, one of those senior men he handled with unexampled patience, himself young. Dimly across my mind there swam that jewelled sentence from Mahan, 'those battered English ships, on which Napoleon's eyes were never cast, stood between him and the domination of the world.' Here was the oldest mourner upon earth.

Outside, the traffic jarred and jammed, and then moved grinding onwards. The placards had forgotten a million vanished men, still young had they returned. A few remained who mourned them, many who mocked their prowess and slandered their sacrificial agonies. My friends were dust, asleep beneath the turf of Tyne Cot, and in a

thousand quiet gardens, with France rebuilt around them, according to their dreams. But here was one to whom France was the home of the Revolution.

Nothing like this had come my way since one remote day in Lambeth, when I had been told by some old retainer that in yonder coach-house there had stood within my informant's recollection the coach presented to Archbishop Sutton-Manners, to carry him and his to Scotland, when Bonaparte should land. Still earlier, I recalled a visit as a child to a small cottage in the Dyfferin upon the landward side of Goodwick, long before the railway had penetrated past Haverfordwest. In the downstairs room, I had been taken in 1894 to the bedside of a Welsh woman said to be of the undoubted age of one hundred and twelve. In 1797, she had been in the fields at harvest, when the French disembarked, took fright at the red hoods and high Welsh hats, mistaking them for the Foot-Guards themselves, and hurried pell-mell to sea. History does not halt. It runs right on, ignoring chapter finials, weaving into its substance the simplest shreds, as a great composer weaves in melodies, from unregarded sources. A generation's agony bores those for whom that agony was endured.

Spilt blood leaves some slight trace; but the stained sawdust is covered in a twinkling by prompt, polite attendants. The crowd round the arena resent the pause, and fan themselves with their programmes. Meanwhile, the whimpering children of that poor gladiator caught and despatched by the *Retarius* had better go back home. They will forget, the public is sympathetically certain. That is the only panacea the public ever knows. And is it true? When the children are themselves grown old, the sight of a net will wake their memory. Sorrows, after the flow of life, are bare again at the ebb. Our scars survive fresh skin.



I woke from my musing to find my cousin continuing thus :

‘ My dear great-uncle Thomas, as I was saying, was a most Godfearing officer, and took with him to sea upon all occasions two Cups and Pattens for Communion. The Cups were not recovered when he died at sea, but the two plates came home with his belongings through the Navy Office.’

My eyes strayed to the site of the old Navy Office, where Pepys had worked, which could be almost seen from the Porch Room window. •

‘ Therefore, your cousin and I decided that the plates should be bestowed upon All Hallows-by-the-Tower ; and see ! I have them here.’

At this stage, she took up her old black reticule, and fumbled with the clasp. I own that I expected two dull late Georgian dishes, ill companions for the dignified Laudian silver-gilt which is the Church’s heirloom, bestowed by Thomas Crathorne and by Margery Covell.

My cousin had now conquered the rebellious catch on her black bag. I wanted time to think. I could not simulate appreciation, if the plates now to emerge were desperately ugly. I said at random : ‘ Why two plates, do you think ? One patten was enough.’

Her answer left me speechless. ‘ You may well ask that question. I asked it once myself, and was informed by my parents that in the Royal Navy at that period, the strictness of the discipline suggested that it would be fitting to have two dishes, the one for the Communion of the Officers, the other for the men.’

I was swept by a keen repulsion from these divisive dishes. I thought how they would bring this vulgar breach of brotherhood into an atmosphere, whence it had long been

driven. Lips high and low, famous and quite unknown, had drained the Laudian cups. Still more, there were now admitted into their company the Chalice and the Patten which, though of slender work, are sacred in a sense which places them apart. The Patten and the Chalice of the Upper Room at Poperinghe fed twenty thousand men, 'of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.' So runs the text graven upon the stem of that small cup of Talbot House; but the proportions are now reversed, and before long no lip which touched the cup will tarry till He come. Yet for these worshippers, of every rank and station, others are now arising who will not forget.

'Here they are,' said my cousin, handing me two silver circles of delicate craftsmanship. I gazed at them, and wondered.

'But these aren't Navy pattern. I don't know much about silver, but surely these are old.'

'I do not know their age,' explained my cousin demurely, 'I only know their melancholy story. My poor great-uncle Thomas! He died at sea, you know.'

Next day, a Colonel who runs messages was asked to take the little dishes down to the most expert silversmith in London. He was crushingly received by a junior, but humbly persevered, until he reached the man who really knew. This man received him with tired courtesy; but when he saw the dishes woke up and left his chair. After a minute observation, conducted with a glass, he said:

'It's been dull weather lately.'

The Colonel, fogged, agreed.

'Business is deadly dull.'

The Colonel was now as much at sea as great-uncle Thomas.

‘But,’ said the man who knew, ‘it has been worth while coming to the City for a dull month, to have these brought to me. They are the workmanship of Richard Syngin, and pleasing specimens. His work is rare in England, very rare. I am happy to have seen them. I need not say, take care of them.’

They came back to All Hallows, no longer overawed by their silver-gilt neighbours, with whom they share not only their security, but the mystic privilege of being lifted up.

One further happiness\* is that great-uncle Thomas was by descent a Wood of Thedden Grange. The dishes, perhaps his parents’ gifts to him, when he gained his first ship, hold graven on their surface the old Wood crest—a savage, armed with a club, and leaning upon a shield, which bears a noble cross. Some years ago it came to pass that the great field of India was troubled with many tares. A wise and patient husbandman needed and desired prayer. He also was a Wood; and the superb coincidence completes itself in these four steps, built in above a century. Great-uncle Thomas took the silver dishes away to sea off Spain; Pepys’ office thence returned them. In her old age, his grand-niece presented them to All Hallows, where they resumed their duty in pleading for a Wood in high command.

At night, in a great building, the eye discerns only the unrelated outline of this or that portion of the fabric. The mind conjectures a harmony unevidenced until the day. Then, with the light at last, the reason for each shadow is established, and their connection is no longer a conjecture. The angels are caught at their work.

Here, then, the conclusion of the matter. I have said that Richard Syngin’s patten bears the coat of arms of the Wood family, of which Lord Halifax is now the head.

When the patten first came into the keeping of All Hallows, the present Lord Halifax was then Lord Irwin, Viceroy of India during the transition. That period of crisis brought the Viceroy on more than one occasion to Calcutta. When he was there in 1928 he found the time for characteristic conduct towards Toc H, and quietly became a private member. The token of the Lamp bestowed that night upon Lord Irwin at a small gathering of ordinary members of Toc H was not forgotten. Soon after he reached home, Lord Irwin came to the Guild Church, unveiled a window, and thought out an address, delivered from a pulpit historied back to the writers of the Authorised Version. Later he stood, a dominating figure, in a light-hearted crowd in the Church garden, while that year's winner of Doggett's Coat and Badge turned on the tap which freed a home-made fountain constructed by the Lightermen and Watermen. Since then he has been busy; not too busy to undertake to lend his honoured name, and more than that, to the campaign for the Relief of Leprosy, to which Toc H has given men and means.

When last December came, Lord Halifax, then recently returned from German Conversations, was bidden by the King to read the Message of His Majesty, as Patron of Toc H, to the York Festival. Thither came ninety well-won Lamps of Maintenance—no nominal achievement on the part of units both at home and overseas. On these, by the King's order, he bestowed for the first time the Gift of Light. This being done, the whole great constellation of the North Country Lamps, already won and steadfastly maintained by Christian service from 'the elder to the younger, from the richer to the poorer, from the friendly to the lonely,' greeted this reinforcement of the Movement. Then, before Prayers dismissed the great assembly, Lord

Halifax broke silence for a space and spoke without constraint. His words went home.

That same night he became our President ; and Richard Syngin's Patten, long ago fashioned to bear its part in the innermost life of his family, and lifted up to plead in recent years for a great Viceroy's way of peace in India, goes forward to connect All Hallows Eucharist with one who leans in leadership on prayer.

•

TO A CLOCK.

*O master of machinery and man,  
Who in thy slender hands dost seize our time  
And with audacity almost sublime  
Hast dared to mould our lives into thy plan,  
Dividing all ' we cannot ' from ' we can,'  
No voice on earth so potent as thy chime.  
However deep we dive, or high we climb,  
Thou measurest the distance and the span.*

*Thy slaves at last have challenged thy domain.  
We set thee forth or backwards at our will,  
Appealing to thy greater lord the Sun.  
No longer absolute is now thy reign  
O'er day and night. So be content to fill  
Thy proper place, until our time be done.*

F. KEELING SCOTT.

# THE BELL.

BY M. A. PEART.

'I'm glad you got off on Friday,' said the Vicar. 'I wanted your opinion on Great Mobberly.'

'Didn't know it was part of your parish,' I said.

'It isn't; it's a perpetual curacy. A chap called Evans came lately. I knew his father, a sound man. But Evans has got the backs of his parish up, and given himself the jitters.'

'Why?'

'Can't say. He's Anglo-Catholic, and fussy—not a good choice after Taylor. Then the village has always bred a lot of toughs, and Evans is nervy, and used to old women. But that's all on the surface.'

We had climbed the lane through a tunnel of hedge and high-ferned banks. The Vicar pulled up at a stile. 'A good view from here,' he said.

'Gad, yes!' I gasped. The view extended to the Channel in undulating hills of timbered pasture land.

'Where every prospect pleases,' said the Vicar. 'That reminds me. Most families here are called Vile.' He lit his pipe.

'You seem a bit disgruntled.'

'I am. I am thinking of giving you up for the week-end. Something's got to be done. Evans wanted police protection.'

'Well, I'm damned,' I said.

'You'll have a most interesting time,' said the Vicar. 'Only wish I could get a locum and be there myself.'

‘Why doesn’t the man Evans go to his bishop, or dean, or something?’

‘He did. Naturally, being of a different school, the old man dried him up. Told him it was all because he’d changed his services.’

‘That’s just what you think yourself.’

‘Partly. But that alone wouldn’t make the village so vicious. They accuse him of a kind of black magic, I gather.’

A car honked, and swung round the corner. ‘In this age?’ I said.

‘Machines, I often think, make more scope for mischief.’

‘If there’s a pub handy, I’d like a drink,’ I said.

‘The “Plough” is the first house in the village. Run by a woman. A great place for gossip.’

We continued our walk, the Vicar sucking his pipe.

‘Now that Evans will have you over the week-end I feel better about the whole thing,’ he said. ‘Dear me, how that wall’s knocked about!’ He stopped and surveyed the scattered stones of the unmortared wall, and the mangold-wurzels beyond it. ‘Those deaths scared them,’ he said.

‘What deaths?’ I asked, startled.

‘Two accidental ones lately. Both men opposed Evans.’

‘You don’t mean to say you think——?’

‘My dear chap, you’ve only to see him. They fell over the combe in a fog. But the village thinks it. They think he “prayed” them dead. I must say my own people show little apprehension about the results of my efforts. Well, here’s the inn. Ah, good morning, Mrs. Buckley.’

A prehistoric dog, with a coat like a Highland steer, came growling from behind the bar, nuzzled the Vicar, and subsided. A stout, formidable woman relaxed her face with a smile.

‘ Good morning, Mr. Winter.’

‘ Morning, George, morning, Vile, morning, Pepper,’ said the Vicar.

The atmosphere showed the usual embarrassed silence when a subject of conversation enters, but the Vicar appeared immune.

‘ Come and hear me Sunday fortnight, George. I’m going to preach your Harvest evening sermon.’

‘ And very glad we be, sir,’ said the oldest ancient.

A general chorus of assent followed.

‘ I doesn’t hold with all passöns. But Mr. Winter, I says, I holds with him. He’ll preach a good sermon. I holds with him and his ways. That’s more than I says of some.’

The speech was approved, the atmosphere expanded, and I ordered drinks. The Vicar turned the talk to the state of the crops, the mangold-wurzels, and to the fallen wall. The atmosphere closed like a clam. The hostess, feeling it incumbent to say something, leant across the bar.

‘ If you’d like to see Ada’s dairy certificate, sir, it’s come back framed.’

‘ Ah, I should,’ said the Vicar.

We entered the inner room, the dog wedging its way in between us. The door closed secretly. I noticed that the hand that closed it trembled.

‘ He’s at it again, sir. Midnight last night. That’s what they were saying when you came in. Which of us next ? Well, he knows my feelings, and if I drop dead in the bar I don’t hide ’em.’

I followed her glance through the distorting diamond panes. A little black figure with the jerky actions of a puppet came through an iron gate, crossed the road, and made for the church. The chiming of a tenor bell broke the



silence. The woman shuddered. The dog, raising its shaggy head, fixed us with its one sound eye, threw up its muzzle, and howled. From the bar came the sound of hastily replenished glasses.

'Down, sir !' said the Vicar. The dog slunk to a corner, but continued to howl.

'This dog was Daniel's dog, sir. I took 'un in to stop Jim Moore ill-treating of him.'

'Good !' said the Vicar. 'I'm glad you did. Put him out.'

The dog, exiled to the bar, continued to howl, while the Vicar studied the new certificate. 'This certificate of Ada's is a capital thing. Capital,' he repeated, replacing his glasses in his pocket.

'That it is, sir,' said the hostess, restored to normal.

'The dog, too, is gifted. A fine musical ear. Did you notice, Hickling, a false tone in the bell ?'

I stared blankly at my friend, for I had always considered him to have no ear whatever.

'I suppose it is a new bell,' he continued. 'I shall advise Evans to have it seen to. Don't let it disturb you again, Mrs. Buckley, and don't let it distress you. We must be getting on. I want to catch him as he leaves the church. Good morning.'

We strolled down the lane. 'He's a good man, Evans,' said the Vicar, 'but I can't stand the fancy work round his neck.'

The Reverend Ozias Evans came from his churchyard gate, and stood fidgeting in the road before us, a small, spectacled puppet of a man, with twitching uneasy movements, shifting from leg to leg.

'It's no good, Winter,' he began, in a high-pitched voice. 'Look at that, and that !' He pointed to cuts and bruises

on his head and hands. 'Stones,' he said. 'Last night I was stoned, I tell you !'

'We can't talk here,' said the Vicar, rounding him towards his gate. 'I've brought Hickling along. He'll spend the night with you.' He propelled the little man to his own front door. We entered Great Mobberly Vicarage and turned into a half-furnished study.

'Would you like some hot milk?' said our host.

'No, thanks,' said the Vicar decisively. 'But if it will put some guts into you, have it.'

The Reverend Evans pushed a bell, which did not work, then jerked himself out of the room, and presently returned bearing a tray with a jug of hot milk and glasses. He poured out some for himself, and skimmed it fastidiously.

'Why did you take that midnight service?' said the Vicar.

'The Eve of St. Cyprian.'

'Ridiculous ! Don't lie, when I'm trying to help you.'

Suddenly the little man broke down. His head fell forward on his arms, his shoulders shook.

'You'll think I'm mad,' he said. 'I must speak, or I shall be. I've had no midnight mass ; I never do, save at Christmas. It's the bell. It rings of itself. I've got to go. Don't you see?' His voice rose almost to a scream. 'If they saw it ringing, ringing, as I see it, they'd say the Devil did it, that's what they'd say. It'd be the end of the Church in my parish. And something ghastly always happens, always. They come running, but I'm in first. They look through the windows. I see their heads through the glass, black against the moon. I pray, and pray, and I ring with it. Then it stops, and I come out. Last night they stoned me.'

'Well done,' said the Vicar. 'Well done. Now, my dear man, Hickling will spend the night with you. You won't be alone. You lock your church at night, of course?'

'About nine o'clock.'

'It's conceivable someone hides there. It would appeal to choirboy humour.'

'You don't believe me.'

'I do. I heard the bell just now. A most unpleasant tone. You were ringing yourself, of course.'

'Yes. Litany.'

'How did you come by it?'

'An old parishioner gave it, a good soul. Had it installed at her own expense. Nothing's wrong with the bell. It's the place, I tell you.'

'I wonder. Anything strike you as similar on the nights of those two deaths?'

'Nothing. Both nights were misty, of course—that heavy white hill-mist. I hate it. You can't see a foot before you. My sexton says there's going to be one to-night.'

'You still think they were accidents?'

He shuddered. 'In this place anything might happen. It was a mist, and they fell over the cliffs of the combe. Yet you'd have said they knew every inch of it. You heard the Coroner's summing up. I can't say much for old Moore. As hard-fisted a pagan as ever breathed, though he didn't hate me like his nephew that's come into the farm. But I got to know Daniel the shepherd when he had lumbago. I visited him. A dear old man. His dog's at the inn now. I'm glad of that. A good dog, and faithful. He used to lie on his grave.' The little man shrank back in his chair, a clockwork figure run down.

'Well,' said the Vicar, rising, 'we must go. I'll bring Hickling over after tea, and come myself to-morrow.'

We'll walk back by the combe, and have a look round. Buck up, man !'

The farm was as bleak and weather-bitten a pile of grey buildings as one could see, standing well up on the hill above the combe. We sat on the edge of the cliff and looked down on the road below, at the scene of the double tragedy. At this point a path turned off from the edge of the combe to the farm. The Vicar smoked.

'They've widened the road a good bit,' he said.

'They're widening them everywhere. Good thing too.'

'I'm not so sure.'

'Why?'

'It's certain death to fall over it now. When it was narrow there was grass, and a chance.'

I gazed down, fascinated, at the shining surface.

'Who would benefit from the deaths?' I asked.

'From the second, no one. From the first, the man who's riding towards us now. Come, I'd like you to meet him.'

A handsome, red-faced man rode down from the farm with a certain swagger. As he smiled I noticed his perfect teeth.

'Morning, Vicar. Having a look round?' he said.

'We've had hundreds here, like cattle round a dewpond. Footprints all mucked up. It was bad weather, you know.'

'Ah, so it was. I was pointing out to Mr. Hickling how the road's improved.'

He tossed back his head and laughed. 'That it has.'

'Let's see, when did they finish?'

A moment's pause. Their eyes crossed. 'Six weeks come Monday,' he said decisively.

'You'll be getting a car now you're at the farm.'

‘Yes. And, more to the point, a wife, and from your parish. Phyllis Symes. I’ll be coming over about the banns.’

‘I congratulate you. A fine character, Phyllis. Did you say next week?’

‘No, a fortnight to-night. Nine o’clock, if it suits you, Vicar. Like to look round the place?’

‘Not this morning, thanks.’

‘Morning, Vicar.’ He set his horse at the nearest gate, and she cleared it like a swallow.

‘Bravado!’ said the Vicar. ‘I think it is Shaw who remarks how straight a liar can stare. It’s a pity you young people never read Shaw; he’s most stimulating.’

‘Rather Edwardian, I think. And it hardly applies to Evans.’

‘Oh, Evans, good man, can’t lie consciously. It was probably his first and last attempt.’

‘I can’t say I spot the lie.’

‘When the road was finished. He put it back a week. A bad blunder.’

‘I still don’t see . . .’

‘It’s the best spot in thecombe to push your enemy over, once the road was finished—not before. And it was finished. Ever read *Othello*?’

I said rather stiffly that I had seen the play, and read it several times.

‘Then you may have remarked that Iago is a bluff and hearty man. Dear me, how good women will trust a black-guard. First Isobel, now Phyllis. Isobel was Moore’s first wife. Well, we shall be late for lunch.’

The four hours that night in Evans’ study were the longest I have ever spent. The chairs were atrociously sprung and

padding, the fire was sullen. Supper had been a penitential meal, a make-up of Friday's fish. Evans himself drank more milk; I can see him yet jerkily skimming his glass. His talk was of missions. I should have preferred a vigil in the church, but the Vicar had extracted a promise that I would not leave him.

After supper he worked on sermon notes and read mission reports, while I read over my notes on the belfry. I had sacrificed my flannels crawling about the bell-cage. The tenor was dated 1599. The inscription, obtained after a good deal of trouble, was 'Dixi custodiam. W.K.' Its pious donor had given no new thing. Where had she found it?

'An odd inscription for a bell,' I said, breaking the silence. 'Know it?'

'Thirty-ninth psalm,' said Evans. 'About the tongue.'

'Odd sort of thing for a bell.'

'A bell's got a tongue,' he said shortly. 'And it's a good psalm.' He screwed himself into a yet more uncomfortable position. Would the man never keep still?

'Have you looked out at the night?' he said suddenly, starting up.

I let down the iron bar, and folded back the shutters. The moon had gone. We were surrounded by a wall of mist. He was standing behind me now, his fingers twitching.

'We'd better get ready,' he said. 'It was like this last time.' He went to the hall, threw a long cape over his cassock, and took the church key from a nail. Suddenly through the night came the clear ringing of the tenor bell.

'Run!' screamed Evans. He threw open the front door, and vanished in the fog. Stumbling, I followed. Luckily I had provided myself with a torch. The night was full of muffled shouts and heavy steps. I swung to

the iron gates, and crossed the lane. The churchyard gate was open. Stumbling into the porch I found Evans unlocking the door. A stone missed our heads and rattled against the ironwork. We fell down the step into the church together. He closed the door, and turned the massive key. I gave a sigh of relief; in the race for the church we had won.

‘Come here and flash your light on the ropes,’ he said. ‘No, here where they can’t see. Tell me, what d’you see, man? What d’you see?’

The tower was used as a belfry. Five ropes hung down, four knotted up as the ringers had left them. The fifth hung loose, and had a red-and-blue striped sally. It was moving upwards towards the roof. It ascended the full three-quarter circle of the wheel, the sally high above our heads, then jerked and ran down as if pulled by invisible hands. Far more terrifying than a visible ghostly presence seemed this rise and fall, pull and counter-pull, of the unaided rope.

Evans pushed me forward. ‘Take it, and ring,’ he said.

I blush to say that I stood like a stone. Not only do I not know how to ring, but the thought of sharing that rope with those invisible fingers froze me.

‘Very well,’ he said, ‘I will.’ He caught the descending rope, and I realised how often and under what stress of mind he had done this before.

Heavy steps ran up the path into the porch. Fists banged and rattled the door.

‘Open, passon, open, or it’ll be the worse for ’ee. Open there!’

He continued to ring. ‘It’s no effort,’ he said. ‘I can tell when the other fellow stops.’ Beads of sweat stood out on his forehead. ‘Thank God, he’s stopping,’ he said. The bell ceased.

'Open, passon, or we'll stone 'ee through the windows !' shouted a voice.

'I'm damned if I open,' I said.

A stone crashed through a window near. 'Open, man !' cried Evans. 'It's fourteenth-century glass.'

I took the precaution to turn the lights full on, for electricity had been lately installed. 'Put down your stones before the police come !' I shouted. 'What do you want ?' I unlocked the door.

The porch was full of malignant faces. I recognised the old man I had seen at the inn and James Moore among them.

The crowd swayed, muttering. 'Where's passon ?' they growled.

'Get home before the police come. I've warned them,' I said.

Moore pushed his way through the packed heavy bodies.

'We've no quarrel with you, Mr. Hickling,' he said. 'You're a stranger. But there's been devil's work here, and Mr. Evans is in it. We want an end on't. It gives the parish a bad name. Who rang the bell ?'

I pointed to Evans.

'We know better. You've been watched. The bell started before you left the Vicarage, passon. Who rang the bell, boys ?'

Someone shouted, 'The Devil !' The pack took up the cry like hounds. 'Aye, the devil, and he raised 'un. Passon's in league with him, he be,' piped the old man.

'You've got to go, passon. Isn't it so, lads ?' cried Moore.

'Aye, go !' A stone emphasised it.

His menacing figure confronted mine. I put up my fists.

'One minute, Moore,' said a quiet voice. 'Put down



those stones, men. These lenses are most expensive. I don't know who's to pay for all this broken glass.' My friend the Vicar had emerged from the belfry. He continued to wipe his glasses, and stowed them neatly away. 'What's all this talk about the bell? I've been here all the time. However, I am delighted to hear you have the good of your parish at heart, Moore. So have I. With Mr. Evans' consent I am trying a few experiments. Don't be alarmed if it goes off again. I shall do everything I can, of course, but probably we shall have to return it. It's very late; we'd better get home. Can you put me up, Evans? Dear me, what's that?'

Fresh shouting and convulsion in the porch as the tightly packed bodies gave way before a mass of fur and muscle. The great dog from the inn hurled himself upon the unwary farmer, and his teeth closed in his leg. The man kicked and staggered, but the dog held his grip. Cursing with rage, the farmer half turned, and brought down his heavy crop again and again.

'Stop, fool, he'll hold tighter!' cried the Vicar. Seeing man and dog were both maddened he caught the descending wrist and wrenched the crop away. Then he stooped and with his bare hands opened the dog's jaws.

'Get to the doctor, and get cauterised,' he said.

'Let me finish him!'

'Get to the doctor. There's talk of hydrophobia at the docks.'

The man's face had gone grey. 'Ought to be shot,' he said.

'I'll see to the dog. Good night, men,' said the Vicar.

'So it was you,' I said with relief as we crossed to the Vicarage.

'Did I say so? No. I want the address of the woman

who gave you that bell, Evans. Hickling must see her. You'll find my Austin under the cart-shed down the lane. Better look her over with your torch before you bring her round, Roger.'

I found him ensconced in a chair with a novel when I returned.

'Anything wrong?' he said. 'I've sent Evans to bed.'

'Yes, the nuts of the left back wheel had been loosened.'

'I have a great respect for that bell,' said the Vicar.

Miss Clara Cox's drawing-room combined some fine old furniture with a regiment of dust-catchers, and yet was a warm and cheerful room. The walls were hung with a collection of religious reproductions, alternating with views of Switzerland, the Lake District, and a strange cliff promontory on which stood a ruined church. A yellow cat stretched herself before the fire, and purred. Presently Miss Cox appeared, a little lady, kind and cheerful, leaning on a stick.

'How very nice to meet a friend of dear Father Evans!' she said. I hastened to explain that I was not of his flock, and brought up the subject of the bell.

'You bought it from the foundry, I understand, Miss Cox.'

'Oh dear no,' she said brightly, 'it was an idea of my own. You see, last Easter we went back for our holiday to dear Rockcliffe. You know it, Mr. Hickling?'

'A fashionable seaside place, I think.'

'Oh dear no. There are two Rockcliffes, the old one on the hill, and the new one in the bay, of course.' She reached down the photograph of the rocky peninsula and set it before me. 'The old church on the hill is, alas, a ruin. We always attend the new church in the town, St. Barnabas.

They're having to enlarge it again. The Rector's very hard up, and that's what gave me the idea. You see, Cecily, my niece, and I were poking about the old church, and we found the tenor bell lying unused in the tower. The bell cage had long since given way. Then I remembered how much poor Father Evans wanted a tenor bell, and I explained it all to the Rector. He was only too glad to sell it, provided it was for a religious use, of course. So I bought it, and the foundry people did the removal for me, and made the new bell cage.'

'Isn't that rather unusual? I mean, to sell the bell away from the place?'

'Oh, but you see, Mr. Hickling, the new church had had a new peal of bells given. They didn't want it. I really thought it such a good idea. And then there was something against the bell—some local prejudice, I think the Rector said.'

'You don't remember it?'

'No, I think it was just that it was an old bell, and they liked them new.'

I thanked her and, returning to my flat, wrote an account to the Vicar, and offered to run down to Rockcliffe for the week-end. He answered that it was not urgent. Things were clearing up. He would like me to come down the following Friday. Meanwhile, would I enquire about sailings to West Africa?

As so often happens, once the name of a place, however remote, has cropped up, one is bound to hear it again. On Wednesday night I was annoyingly called out of my flat in the middle of an excellent performance by the Brosa quartet. By the time my garrulous neighbour had gone I found that the quartet had finished and a talk was on of

the burrower-into-wormholes type. I was about to switch off when the name Rockcliffe stayed me.

‘Few listeners,’ said a clipped and careful voice, ‘would associate with the modern watering-place the grim trial of 1698, known as the Rockcliffe Wreckers Trial. Winstanley’s lighthouse was not then finished. Such warning as was given to shipping in fogs and gales was given by bonfires along the coast or bells, often from church towers. Some spires were truncated in order to be used as beacons for this purpose. The church of Rockcliffe on its peculiar promontory was of especial value as a beacon light in the Channel, and one of the sexton’s duties was to keep a supply of wood in the tower, and toll the tenor bell in a fog.

‘Needless to say, the warning, a matter of life or death to sailors, meant loss to wreckers, and there were many cases of false lights and false bells. In September, 1698, the Rockcliffe sexton’s life was threatened, but the brave man continued his duties. One night of fog the wreckers, headed by a man called Leaver, had their expectations raised by the proximity of a barque, the *Flying Spray*. The sexton was caught in the belfry as he was about to ring the bell. On refusing to hold his tongue he was murdered and thrown over the cliff. Misled by a false bell used by the wreckers the *Flying Spray* struck the rocks, and such survivors as reached the shore met the sexton’s fate.

‘Justice was brought home through the persistence of the sexton’s dog and the one survivor from the wreck. The dog’s persistence in attacking Leaver and the sailor’s plight appealed to the better natures in the village, and the hostess of the inn turned Queen’s evidence against her brother. It was the story of the Rockcliffe trial that determined Winstanley——’

I switched off, and sent my notes of the talk to the Vicar.

He thanked me, and sent a cheque for a second-class passage on the *Myona* and a ticket from the local junction to London. He expected me on Friday, he said.

The Vicar's study is a comfortable book-lined room with mullioned windows. So here, I thought, glancing round it, the hunt will end. The Vicar arranged papers, pens, a book, and an envelope on the table before him, then opened a door of an inner closet or cupboard containing an old chest and the parish registers.

'You brought your revolver?' he said.

I nodded.

'I am a man of peace, but to-night it may be necessary. Cover Moore from the moment he enters, and watch him. You will see clearly through the perforated zinc. Now we must wait. I'm sorry I can't suggest your smoking.' He closed the door.

A bell pealed. I heard a dog bark violently. The maid opened the front door, and I heard her ascending the stairs, followed by a man.

'Mr. Moore to see you, sir.'

'Ah, come in,' said the Vicar. 'Take a seat, Moore.'

He dropped easily into a chair, and from my post I could not but admire his splendid physique. The Vicar opened the banns book. The servant descended the stairs.

'Full particulars here, Vicar,' said Moore, pushing over a paper.

The maid had reached the kitchen and closed the double doors. The Vicar closed the book.

'Will you open that envelope, Moore? There is a passage to West Africa and your ticket to London. Your ship sails to-morrow.'

'What do you mean, you fox?'

‘Don’t draw. Mr. Hickling is behind you. You will write me a cheque for the amount of the passage and ticket, and sign this paper clearing Mr. Evans of all knowledge of the murders of your uncle and the shepherd Daniel, and of all the other malpractices of which you have accused him. Read, and sign. I say nothing of your attempts on myself.’

The man laughed. ‘You’ll have your time cut out bringing all those birds to roost. You heard the coroner.’

‘Exactly. That is why I have booked your passage. Mr. Evans’ extensive knowledge of missions enabled me to find a suitable spot. I suggest a trading job. The tribes in this territory have so far resisted missionary effort. Their physique equals yours, and their sense of justice is crude but prompt.’

‘D’you think I’m a fool, now I’ve the farm and Phyllis?’

‘You will go because of Phyllis—and Mr. Evans. Your brother can take over the farm. If you refuse I hold this’—he opened another paper—‘the dying statement of your first wife, Isobel Moore, witnessed and held by me for fourteen years. The original is at my bank with my instructions.’

‘A parson’s honour!’ sneered the man.

‘Exactly. It would have remained there had not these and other lives been in danger. Strange as it seems, your wife, Isobel Manners, loved you, and held her peace. A certain blow you gave her killed both her and your child. If you remain, I shall hand this to her brothers.’

‘You devil!’

The Vicar appeared by no means displeased at this. ‘Not at all,’ he said, ‘not at all. There is ample time for you to pack and catch the night mail at the junction. Will you sign?’

The man drew the paper towards him, read, cursed, and

signed. He rose to go, towering above us. 'You've trapped me for now,' he said, 'but one day, Parson Winter, I'll return, and then——'

'Ah,' said the Vicar, 'threatened men live long. Good night, Moore.'

We heard his steps descend the stairs. The heavy front door closed, his feet crunched the gravel, the gate swung to.

'I think we may have a well-earned smoke,' said the Vicar.

'What do you make of it all?' I asked, when we were seated before the fire.

'It has long been a theory of mine that a cycle of events tends to repeat itself,' he said. 'Given the key, the conditions here this fall were much the same as those in Rockcliffe in September 1698. Then Evans imported the bell. I had long had my eye on James Moore. His mother was a Leaver. Yes, the family migrated to this parish about the beginning of the eighteenth century. Good stock in the main, but apt to throw up a violent shoot. Registers are sometimes a record of family character, Roger. As you now know, I knew the cause of his first wife's death. I was not wholly unprepared for the sudden death of his uncle. Still, old Moore was a heavy drinker; it might have been accidental. But the death of Daniel shook me.'

'You think he witnessed the murder?'

'Perhaps witnessed, more likely suspected. He was an excellent tracker. I at once realised other lives would be endangered—Evans and the dog.'

'Why Evans?'

'He had visited old Daniel when he was ill precisely at this period. Moore must have suspected that some confidence had passed between them. He wished to get rid of Evans, and the dog.'

‘ You think he used the bell ? ’

‘ Ah, there you jump too far. No, that is the interesting point : the bell rang of itself. Think back to the previous cycle. A brave man violently cut off, his will set on ringing that bell at all costs. Again cliffs, again fog, again a violent man—a Leaver—plotting. Even the dog. “ Justice was brought home through the persistence of the dog.”

“ It went against the grain to let him go. But I had not sufficient evidence, and the police had failed to get it.”

He smoked for a time in silence, brooding. There came a knock at the door.

‘ I’ve shut all up for the night, sir.’

‘ Good night, Mary.’ She still waited. ‘ What is it ? ’

‘ Todd’s out, sir. Todd, Daniel’s dog.’

‘ What ? ’

‘ He slipped his chain, sir. He bolted when I opened the wash-house door.’

‘ Hickling,’ cried the Vicar, ‘ get out the car. Run, man ! We may catch them yet. Did Mr. Moore walk ? ’

‘ Yes, he comed by the coombe, sir, I reckon by his boots. He allus do unless he rides.’

‘ There’s just a chance,’ said the Vicar.

As I brought round the car he and the maid swung open the big gates. He swung himself in.

‘ There’s a path up the side of the combe from the forge. We may cut them off there.’

Letting all out, I drove through the village and round the wood. Leaving the car by the forge, we climbed the steps up the cliff by flashlight to the path along the top.

‘ They’ve both passed,’ said the Vicar, glancing at the ground. ‘ Run on, man. No, wait ; he’s dangerous. I’m coming.’

The moon sailed out from behind her ragged clouds.



The bleak, moor-like top of the combe was empty. We reached the bend where the path to the farm diverged, the spot where we had sat together in the sunshine, and I had first seen Moore.

‘Look!’ said the Vicar, grasping my arm. ‘Look down!’ He led me to the precipitous edge. ‘Look, look!’

Spreadeagled below on the metalled surface of the road lay the unmistakable figure of the man. A mass of fur lay across him. Both lay still.

‘Dead!’ whispered the Vicar. ‘Both dead. The dog too. The same place. Justice.’

The wheel had come full circle.

It was some weeks before my friend, when he wrote, referred to Great Mobberly, though I had asked several times what had been done with the bell. At last I received a card.

‘Evans and I persuaded the Rector of Rockcliffe to take it back. Miss Cox kindly bore the expense. There is an efficient lighthouse, and I don’t suppose it will ring again. The Rector at first raised difficulties. I pointed out that he had sold it without a faculty.’

## GIANTS AND MONSTERS.

BY C. E. LAWRENCE.

NATURE abhors the eccentric, and when the abnormal occurs appears to ignore it. What she must think of the distortions to which some of her creatures in our civilised conditions have been put is more than we can say.

Men of science tell us that if the whole tribe of specialised pigeons—the fantails, tumblers, pouters—were left to breed uncontrolled, or as their columbine hearts determined, their descendants would lose the eccentricities that mark the divisions of the species and eventually revert to a similarity with the common rock-dove, their original progenitor. Treat dogs in the same manner and back they would go to the grey wolf; though doubtless it would take many careless generations to dis-breed the peculiar characteristics of greyhounds and bloodhounds, pugs, dalmatians, chows, spaniels and pekes. Yet, restore her own to Nature, let mongrel mate with mongrel, without care for the consequences, and in a century or two the dog would have returned to his origins—and doubtless be utterly detestable, useless as a companion, too treacherous to be a pet, a dishonest guardian, sneaking and cowardly except when driven desperate by hunger.

When it comes to Humanity the same conditions apply, though only through the interests of caste has any sort of system in breeding been attempted with mankind, and that through the concerns of 'Family,' of 'Blood'—generally inbred, but also and often through considerations of Money as well. Even the Eugenists who look with serious eyes

at the super-intelligentsia in the hope of their producing offspring of the best quality by having them mate with the class wherein culture and prosperity are combined, seem to have done no more than generally urge uncertain theories and publish statistics. But while *l'homme propose*, the Love-god in his mischief too frequently disposes. The Professor argues and pleads ; but indifferent to the 'isms and 'ologies and blinding his eyes with his own roseate wings Cupid goes on in his haphazard fashion ; and so it comes that sometimes freaks occur to mankind, as also genius may occur. Dwarfs and giants, or at least persons a little too small or too large, are born, to become, through their difference from the general standards of height and bulk, noticeable, and, on the whole, it is to be feared, for that reason, often unhappy.

Did ever a giant exist—meaning a real, live, colossal and preposterous man-monster and not a mere nightmare of fable ? We are tempted to say No ; but that would be too heartless a word to come in an essay as soon as this. Anak, that biblical wonder and distant offspring of the sons of God who mated with the daughters of men ; what really were his dimensions, and did he truly father a gigantic brood ? We have it on scriptural authority that he did so ; but may it not be that as with the lengths of years the earliest patriarchs are said to have lived—Adam, 930 ; Jared, 962 ; Methusaleh, 969—the writer of Genesis worked by other measures than those we have known ? Anyhow, he probably was no arithmetician. It is asserted, however, that the ancient Egyptians, with whom Moses, as the Book tells us, was closely allied, counted every lunar month as a year. If that were so, then the problem is solved. Methusaleh was really less than seventy-five years old when he died, and not so marvellous after all. It is likely, therefore,

that, through a similar cause, the measures of human height and girth were different from those that are conventional to us.

Another cause of disturbance comes from the uncertainties of travellers. When the faint-hearted Israelites, who with Caleb explored the Promised Land before the entry of the rest of their people, reported, 'And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants : and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight,' they probably were merely as mistaken as were the earliest English adventurers to the American Indies who saw there

*'men whose heads  
Do grow beneath their shoulders.'*

At worst we may believe those travellers were guilty of honest exaggerations due to fear rather than a desire to tell tall tales, though evidently it is easy under the emotion of a new experience to extend the phenomenal by inches or even at times by a cubit or two.

If the Anakim really were giants, where are the remains of those monsters whose tribal freedom Joshua destroyed? Goliath too, so easily extinguished through a stone from a shepherd's sling, did he leave nothing behind him but a name? No over-large little ones?

Not that, on second thoughts, this is much to go by; for in prehistoric times there certainly were huge creatures on the earth, mammoths and mastodons, pterodactyls, dinosaurs with their sisters and their cousins and their aunts; while even now there are elephants, rhinoceri, hippopotami, crocodiles, ostriches and whales big as houses—as nobody can deny! So that if prehistoric animals were often colossal, why not also the men and women engendered when the world was young and, like many other young things, apt

to exaggerate? The circumstance that no remains of a giant have been discovered means almost nothing. His bones and skin at their toughest cannot have been as enduring as a dragon's scaly hide or the massive bone-structure of a mammoth, such as we know have been preserved as fossils and otherwise among the rocks or in the swamps that cloaked the Earth before it developed a crust solid enough to bear pyramids and sky-scrapers.

This is a case where facts have been forced to bend before imagination and rhetoric ; and no amount of calm reasoning will disestablish the Titans who, in the legendary æons when even Cronus was a youth, hurled boulders in the pride of their strength, easily uprooted trees and with the playful movement of a foot sent avalanches crashing down the mountain-sides to come to eternal silence in the valleys. And as those Titans wrought, building the Giant's Causeway in Ireland, and (as tradition as late as the Tudors declared) bringing Stonehenge from Africa in a single night, so, too, they fought each other, or hunted the mighty creatures of the wild, or played their boisterous games with a will ; while their shouts and laughter, echoing among the hills, brought terror to the scattering of mankind cowering in their wretched wattle shelters. Through such influences the fear of the gods—awe of those giant ones—was born, and the lightning-flashes and thunder-bolts, in their loud mystery terrible, caused the souls of men to think and make conjecture as well as tremble.

But while such violent convulsions inspired the thought of divine wrath, so the warming, invigorating sun and the placid light of the silver moon were equally accepted as witnesses to God's everlasting mercy, benevolence and peace. It is inevitable for Mankind to give the powers, whether of Heaven or of Nature, an anthropomorphic guise, and

in places where the forces of existence appear the most formidable, as among the mountains, fjords and valleys of the Norse, so the aspects of those forces appeared to visionary eyes as supermen, giants ; to become in the slow courses of time such as Woden, Balder, Frey and his sister, Freya, that intolerable virgin whose cradle was the snows, and Thor, with his hammer, before which even the iron hills were dissolved to dust, but who yet was simple enough to be duped by Loki into attempting to drink dry the sea. Those were hearty giants, demi-gods with a humour too oppressive, perhaps, for full appreciation by feeble and defenceless mankind, yet capable of bringing their awful mirthfulness to regions where only themselves could persist.

Polyphemus, Hyperion, with others like them, belonged to less boisterous branches of the same titanic family. As to Polyphemus, even Homer failed to make him colossal in spirit, although he described him as not like a mortal but like a mountain-peak crowned with trees. Happily Homer was not often so vague as that. Yet the monster was too bestial for greatness, being in his cruelty a mere ogre though of swollen dimensions, with only a poor mind and petty cunning that were fitly met by the equally simple artifice of Ulysses. But while in the *Odyssey* Polyphemus was just an extraordinary brute, Turner, in his painting in the London National Gallery of Ulysses deriding him, shows him as wrought of the texture of the clouds and dwelling half-way between the world and heaven, making all things underneath him, even with their beauty and heroism, trivial. The painter in that incident was the greater poet.

With Keats's Hyperion, and especially his Saturn, whose sorrow in loneliness the poet has depicted with glowing

imaginative greatness, we meet others whose measures outdo those of men, as Thea,

*' a Goddess of the infant world,  
By fier in stature the tall Amazon  
Had stood a pigmy's height ; '*

yet those Titans are human only in their pride, resentment against injustice, and despair.

And it is lovely in this close connection with the titanic, as it illustrates the delicate wonder of Shakespeare's genius for humour, that he should have named his infinitesimal Queen of the Fairies, that minutest of immortals—Titania. Those wide extremes, the Titans and she—who without being very much squeezed might have ridden by the side of Queen Mab in the hazel-nut shell, her chariot !

Through these super-folk—and she is of the super-folk too—we descend to the super-heroes, men to whom legends have given especial powers and added girth and height, whose tombs are often the nameless barrows of Wilts and Dorset, and who now are only to be recalled by their bare names, as Lud and Leir, the latter of whom, however, is our familiar King Lear, reclothed by Shakespeare and restored to human dimensions and weaknesses. The legendary Guy of Warwick, who slew a dragon in Northumbria as well as the Danish giant Colbrand, also possibly was one of them ; but his record is so distorted through romantic absurdities that even the existence of Guy's Cliffe in Warwickshire makes him less real than any.

It may be that Gog and Magog, whose large brightly painted wooden effigies in the music-gallery of the London Guildhall give enjoyment to aldermen and children, were of their following ; non-commissioned officers, we may suppose, in the armies of lost British chieftains—they look

so like company-sergeant-majors of a less-efficient age, dressed for pantomime. Harrison Ainsworth in his unhistorical romance, *The Tower of London*, made them yeomen-warders of that fortress in the time of the Tudors and added unto them a third, Og, a namesake of the King of Bashan. Their names were borrowed from the Bible, their effects were futile. In no way in the romance were they giants at all ; but, at best, only lesser or larger Falstaffs, witless and humourless.

Having drifted to the regions of pantomime and what is called imaginative literature, it may be well to continue therein for a time and find the giants who, while in works of genius they were better than aspects of a joke, were merely ridiculous in most efforts of fiction and almost entirely so on the theatrical stage. To begin with them and gradually rise to the sublime is our natural course and shall be followed—yes, truly to the sublime, for we shall end this division of our subject with the Miltonic Satan who was of that genius, gigantic in his structure as in his ambition, powers of hatred and pride, and still unsubdued though suffering enforced humiliations, worse to him than the pain of the burning marl to whose ever-scorching surface the poet and the angels of God had cast him, ‘flaming from the ethereal sky.’

So back we go, meanwhile, to Fee-Faw-Fum who represents all the giants of Pantomime, that otherwise are nameless—as of him whose beanstalk Jack climbed, and of him who was killed in the shape of a mouse by that servant and mentor of my Lord Marquis of Carabas, Puss in Boots. Such figures, like other talking animals and the Guildhall Gog and Magog, may be relics of ancient folk-faith, if not of folk-lore, and for want of records, combined with the illiteracy of the people, forgotten ; but in the darker ages, doubtless, often talked of by those old children who were



terrified or uncertainly amused by them and their clumsy, threatening antics.

Generally in pantomime they are separate—‘Voices Off’—and unseen, for it would cost too much to stuff and make them movable, though at Drury Lane, where they can do all sorts of impossible things and spend fortunes in the sacred names of Entertainment and Nonsense, representations of giants have been seen, as at the time of the second Boer War, when the figure of a giant Kruger would have been shown sprawled in defeat on that famous stage, if it had not been that the actual Kruger happened just then to be tiresomely alive and kicking. Sometimes in pantomime creatures called giants appear and march stiffly, stumpily, to the compelling music of Herman Finck; but they are misnamed when called gigantic, being too evidently men and women on stilts who represent the grotesqueness without the bodily fullness of acceptable gianthood.

Because Pantomime has enslaved some of the Arabian Nights and brought Sinbad the Sailor, with other Eastern adventurers amid azure seas, golden mountains and glittering or gloomy caves of magic, to stages whereon their mothers have generally proved curiously Cockney and comic, we may as well discover what giants or persons of colossal stature appeared in the tales with which Scheherazade consoled the sleeplessness of her King but find that no mere man-mountain or Quinbus Flestrin was there. Instead we have colossal Djins, spirits of terror and obedience, slaves to lamps and rings and abracadabra—and not a great many of them. But two stand out. The first is the Afrit released by the Fisherman from the Brass Bottle (with which Mr. Anstey made good farcical play); and here is how Lane of the ‘Thousand-and-One Nights’ described that monster, after the released smoke from out of which

the Afrit emerged had condensed and then had grown agitated. His 'head was in the clouds, while his feet rested upon the ground : his head was like a dome : his hands were like winnowing forks ; and his legs, like masts : his mouth resembled a cavern : his teeth were like stones ; his nostrils, like trumpets ; and his eyes, like lamps ; and he had dishevelled and dust-coloured hair.' More than colossal, and more than confusing and but little impressive.

Sinbad and his companions also had their Djinn who came out of the upper air, 'a person of enormous size, in human form, and he was of black complexion, of lofty stature, like a great palm-tree : he had two eyes like two blazes of fire, and tusks like the tusks of swine, and a mouth of prodigious size, like the mouth of a well, and lips like the lips of the camel, hanging down upon his bosom, and he had ears like two mortars, hanging down upon his shoulders, and the nails of his hands were like the claws of the lion.' So fearsome and ferocious is he that he transcends the bounds of ferocity and all the fears, and any attempt to put him on a London stage would be as amusing as some of the dragons with which we have seen Siegfried battle, in which encounter the audience remained so polite to the genius of Wagner that no one for a moment could have suspected that the flabby bogey really only amused them.

That Sinbad's testimony to the anthropophagic Djinn must be taken as of authority is shown by his further witness to the existence of that marvellous great bird, the roc, beside which the largest of our prehistoric monsters would be a mere domesticated sheep. Not only he but his companions also mistook the roc's egg for a white dome and afterwards had their ship's steering shattered by huge masses of stone dropped on them in revenge by the parents because they had carelessly slain their innocent great chick.

Pantomime has not been the only stage-form in which the giant—so termed in the jargon of such freak-shows as Phineas T. Barnum organised, with his Tom Thumbs, living skeletons, bearded ladies, pigs with two heads or five feet, and other uncharming attractions for the delectation and pence of the not-too-nobly curious—appeared, as Sir Arthur Pinero wrote a comedy, *The Freaks*, in which a minor character was the giant from a travelling show received into a private house. The play was not of its author's best, while his device of causing his freak to fall in love with the daughter of his host did not quite touch the heart. The association suggested was a little unpleasant. Yet I cannot forget the dark mournfulness of that giant's eyes, hopeless under repudiation. It was the most memorable circumstance of the play, and brought home the hardly necessary moral of the handicaps suffered by human freaks, who, born with the passions of mankind, may find that conditions prevent their enjoying their natural rights to happiness. It seems also that the overgrown have an added infirmity; that the energies which should stimulate their minds must be used instead to keep up the vitalising fires of the body, so that generally they are slow in the uptake, stupid.

So for the Stage; and now for Fiction. In his novel, *The Food of the Gods*, Mr. Wells made an endeavour to justify the breeding, or purposed development, of a giant human race. A food was invented for the special growth of the chosen in mankind. Through a carelessness, likely to happen in ordinary life and bound to occur in a novel, other things beside the men and women for whom the food was intended ate of it, and giant rats and wasps, as large as those which harassed Lemuel Gulliver—his rats being the size of mastiffs and his wasps of partridges—were developed to endanger human safety and Mr. Wells's plot. The

pests were overcome and in the course of not too long a time super-men and women, giants beautiful, beneficent and with their wits well about them, peopled England. Yet what in the end was the use of all that? So far as I recall the tale, the new giants were only unlike ourselves in being much larger. They added nothing to the spiritual or other wealth of life; and if the only result of their existence was to occupy more space—then Why?

The reference to Gulliver transports us to Brobdingnag, that was, he tells us—and surely still must be—somewhere beyond the Straits of Madagascar.\* There the giants needed no Wellsian food to make them oppressive to normal humanity. In Swift's realistic imagination the unpleasantnesses of the flesh exaggerated were so surely seen that now and then the frankness made one falter and recognise the inconveniences of mere bulk; but, as with Gulliver and the Lilliputians, it is through his physical contrast with theirs that amusement is caused; almost the only amusement in a book which through the popular misunderstanding of the author's intention has been taken as humorous and for children, whereas in its purposes *Gulliver's Travels* had something of the bitterness of a libellous eighteenth-century political pamphlet.

It is different with the giant-tribe of Rabelais' boisterous invention; for Gargantua, who begat Pantagruel at the age of 444, with the others of his monstrous clan were of a largeness and grossness far above the ordinary who served them. Gargantua did his hair with a comb nine hundred feet long, 'whereof the teeth were great tusks of elephants.' Such vastness is only oppressive. Why Rabelais needed those major-monstrosities is now not clear; and so much of the significance of the satirical romance has gone, through the points of the allusions being lost, that

its author is one of the least comprehensible of those whose works are preserved on the shelves of greatness.

On the other hand, John Bunyan's allegorical monsters have reality because of his simple sincerity ; and although his Slaygood and the more elaborate Giant Despair of *Castle Doubting* play but story-book rôles in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, with a religious moral waiting for application after every incident, they are just the conventional gross brutes who act according to the rules that govern ogres in fairy-tales, and possess dungeons, cruelties and appetites consonant with the traditions of the crudely grotesque.

We return at length to that most sublime of imaginative figures—Satan, Milton's conception of whom outdoes even that of Dante, who depicts him in the *Inferno*, as colossal, defeated and finally fallen, thrown, to the frozen centre of the Earth, that ultimate base of hopelessness and the very pit of Hell ; while in *Paradise Lost* he is shown as not untriumphant, though suffering the bad eminence of leadership in disaster among the eternal fires. The greatness of the Miltonic Satan is, of course, merely an expression of the poet's own grandeur of vision, thought and utterance. But while all that is easily true, Milton, unfortunately, was not content to leave his vast conception sufficiently to the imagination ; and, as Swift did playfully and therefore not unconvincingly with the Brobdingnagians and Lilliputians, he used details in describing Satan's mere bulk that tended to belittle him through bringing him too precisely into the system of measures that are normally used by men. His shield was like the moon, his spear as tall as a ship's mast, 'his bulk of monstrous size, Titanian.'

All the passages wherein Satan appears are fine, and often magnificent, poetry ; but such comparisons suggest that he was merely to be classed with the Colossus of Rhodes,

material and not wearing the awful glory of the archangels, enshrouded with intolerable brilliance, and so reveals a weakness in the poet which also allowed us to overhear the Very Highest, even God and Christ, in discussion, thereby disclosing in them not so much an eloquence divine as the laboured insistencies of Puritan advocates at a benevolent religious conference.

Yet in the minds of our credulous forbears Satan was not only an omnipresent influence, tempting men, deceiving and destroying them, through tricking them into indulging lusts that poisoned their souls ; but also was vindictive and forceful in his passions, venting them in crude violence on the hills, so that such considerable facts as the Devil's Dyke and Punch-bowl exist to show the havoc he could wreak in his ungentlemanly transports.

Moral greatness or heroism—nay, sometimes even the widely admired—were almost bound in any credulous age to be translated into the terms of physical largeness. An easy fault ; an ever-available tendency and weakness, as Carlyle disclosed in his *Heroes and Hero Worship* and as, in their ordinary spheres, many gardeners or newspaper-correspondents talkatively illustrate with their giant gooseberries, and some anglers with their newly or nearly caught fish which surely belong to the far-distant progeny of the Great Leviathan.

As to our conclusion—with such moral as you please ; we now can ask again and are able to answer our earlier question, Was there ever truly a giant on the Earth, and not a mere exaggerated man after the character of the chosen—or kidnapped—seven-foot guardsmen of Frederick the Great's father or the nine-foot-nine Garbara of ancient Rome, vouched for by the Elder Pliny ?

Fables are simply made and as frequent deceivers as dreams. They may grow as Porthos, that big one of the thrusting Musketeers of Dumas, grew in bulk and glamour as his creator's fond admiration of him increased under the spell of further contemplation and an ever-alert inversion. Most men are ready to drift into accepting the incredulous and even wilfully to mislead themselves while they are able easily to make mistakes—as once a verger did when, on going to a lady in church and asking her not to stand on the hassock, he discovered to their mutual embarrassment that she was only over-tall. No. As Betsy Prig in a fevered, ungrateful moment declared of Mrs. Harris, so we of the super-gigantic . . . . Giants? We don't believe there was no such persons—but yet with all that we hope they will continue to roar and trample through the story-books and pantomimes, and flourish there for years and years and years, as they are almost as necessary as fairies.

## *THE FORTUNATE DISASTER.*

BY C. T. STONEHAM.

ONLY Bryan Forbes knew the true story of Tracey's disgrace, and he forbore to repeat such an improbable tale. The man, a visitor to Kenya from Johannesburg, where he was a prosperous and respected physician, was convicted of a ferocious attack on a native and deported from the Colony.

It began with Tracey looking out of his bedroom window the fourth morning of his visit and seeing something entrancing. Forbes' house was built of stone, the only two-story building in that part. From the upper window the guest looked out on lawn and rose garden and a large orchard. Beyond this was an expanse of grass leading to the forest, dark green and dense. In the clean early sunlight Tracey saw a large antelope come from the forest to the wire fence of the orchard. It was a bull kudu, mature and splendid in shining rufous hide and huge spiral horns.

It was Tracey's first sight of one of these wilderness aristocrats, and he watched enthralled. At the fence the animal knelt, thrust his nose under the wire and skilfully insinuated himself. The slack wire bumped along the curves of his laid-back horns, he slid forward and rose within man's stronghold. With haughty composure he walked to an apple-tree laden with fruit and with his horns angled for a branch. This, entangled in those wide loops, he pulled down until it broke and hung within easy reach. Then he proceeded to eat apples with leisurely enjoyment.

Tracey threw on his coat and ran downstairs to the dining-room. 'Where are you, Forbes?' he cried. As



his host emerged from his study he demanded a rifle. 'There is a marvellous kudu eating your apples. If I go quickly I shall get him.'

Forbes, elderly and bespectacled, shook his head, smiling. 'Malu again! He is a frequent visitor and an incorrigible thief. But you won't surprise him; he is a very clever fellow.'

Tracey was impatient. 'He's there now. I'll get him.'

Forbes re-entered his room and brought a .256 Mannlicher and a clip of cartridges. In a few minutes Tracey was stealing across the dew-wet lawn, intent on slaughter.

But Malu had gone; there was no trace of him save that broken branch which he had stripped of fruit. Tracey was astonished that the animal had effaced itself so quickly. He crossed to the forest and peered into its tangled depths, but did not discover the robber.

The kudu stood in a dense thicket on the fringe of the forest and watched the hunter. There were no dogs to be seen, and Malu knew himself safe. He had played hide-and-seek with men often enough and his respect for their capabilities had waned. Apparently, they could discover nothing by smell; a good screen of leaves was sufficient protection from them.

Tracey returned to breakfast filled with a new enthusiasm. That day he had intended to fish; now his plans were changed. The sight of those huge spiral horns had awakened a rabid desire; he had the trophy-mania in all its restless virulence.

At breakfast he questioned his host about the kudu.

'He has stolen my fruit and vegetables for the past two years,' Forbes informed him. 'Only at the mating season does he absent himself. One or two of my guests have hunted him, but they tell me he is very cunning, up to all

the tricks. Before my dogs died they used to chase him. I don't know what happened after they vanished into the forest, but evidently he had means to escape them, for he came back to steal again every week or so.'

Tracey knew his friend was no sportsman. Forbes seemed interested only in husbandry, and the acclimatising of exotic trees which he obtained as seedlings from every quarter of the globe. His correspondence on this subject was voluminous; he spent half his time with books and a typewriter, the other half inspecting his nurseries and plantations.

'You don't seem to mind the buck helping himself to your produce.'

'He leaves more than enough for my needs,' Forbes smiled. 'So long as he leaves my trees alone he is welcome to his perquisites.'

'Well, I want to get a shot at him. You don't object?'

'Not in the least, my dear chap. Amuse yourself as you please. If you intend to hunt Malu I will give you a boy as guide, otherwise you will get lost in the forest.'

The promised guide materialised as a scrawny, sullen Kamba named M'lefu. He presented himself clad in a cotton blanket stiff with dirt, and clumsy ox-hide sandals. His hair was plaited with clay in imitation of a Masai moran, and he carried a long-bladed spear. He had worked for a missionary and spoke a sort of English, but he spoke seldom, being the most taciturn individual Tracey had ever encountered.

'Meat is their delight,' Forbes explained. 'M'lefu will do his best to help you shoot the kudu.'

Tracey found the Kamba's best not good enough. With his borrowed rifle and a pocketful of cartridges he set out behind the oaf, who led him into the forest on trails where

no spoor of kudu was discernible. The tyro was impatient, quick action was his need. He stirred his phlegmatic guide to speed and followed the trails at a purposeful three miles an hour, expecting at every moment to flush the quarry. At meal-times he returned tired and disgruntled, asserting that the surrounding forest was empty of everything larger than a dik-dik. Forbes, as ignorant as himself, could not advise him; M'lefu would say nothing but 'No good,' accompanied by an exasperating bovine stare. The native was doing the work for which he was paid; its outcome did not concern him. Like all his kind, he had no hope of success until he should see it within his grasp.

At the end of a week Tracey would have abandoned his efforts in boredom but that he found new evidence of Malu's depredations in the orchard. The kudu must lurk near: the trophy-hunter should not be discouraged. The length of the chase would enhance the value of the prize.

For days Tracey stalked up to the orchard at dawn and dusk, but without a glimpse of Malu. Then in his host's library he found a book on African hunting. Half the night he read it, and his eyes were opened to a new world.

The next morning he dismissed the dreary Kamba and took his way into the forest alone. Among the bushes he moved very slowly, pausing often to look and listen. It was dry-forest, having no trees bigger than acacia and red-thorn. Bushes of many varieties rioted in the sandy soil, there were numerous glades of thick green grass, and streams descended from the mountain range to the west. Deep ravines filled with rocks and bushes made progress toilsome, but Tracey knew now that these were favourite hiding-places for the game and he no longer found them unin-

teresting. He tried to make each turn of the trail a threshold of discovery ; he pondered and conjectured, noting each sign of displaced leaf or trampled dust, the behaviour of birds, furtive and nervous in the undergrowth. The rattle of doves' wings, the croaking of hornbills, began to have meaning for him.

He saw a troop of Sykes' monkeys playing on the ground, and was able to circumvent them unsuspected. He found a wild pig drinking at a stream, watched by a supercilious heron. A pair of dik-dik made love in a glade within five yards of a basking python. And then—wonderful experience !—he came upon a big sleek leopard crouched on a fallen log staring with amber eyes at a herd of impala grazing beyond the stream. For some time he studied this, hoping to see Chui at his hunting, and learnt that wild animals have a sense of being watched, so that impala suspected leopard and leopard suspected man.

Shortly after that, to his astonishment, it was dusk, and he must return to the farm, terminating a day of absorbing interest and pleasure.

For the next two weeks Tracey spent every daylight hour in the forest. He became lean and brown, clear-eyed and thoughtful. His movements insensibly slowed ; he grew unaware of haste, had boundless leisure and no anxieties. No disturbance ruffled the increasing calmness of his temperament, which had once been nervous with the pressure of affairs.

Forbes seemed oblivious of the passing of time ; his friend was content and might stay with him for months. Once, he enquired of the progress of the hunt.

Tracey confessed that he had not seen the kudu. ' Buffalo, a rhino, any amount of waterbuck and impala—and some eland—but no kudu.'

‘ Bless my soul, I didn’t know we had all that stuff so close to the farm ! ’ exclaimed Forbes. ‘ But you have shot nothing.’

Tracey acknowledged, with surprise at the realisation, that he had fired the rifle only to kill a poisonous snake. He was made ashamed by Forbes’ mirth.

‘ Stigand says you should hunt the selected beast irrespective of all others,’ he defended himself.

But that night, smoking solitary in the moonlight, he considered that Malu’s head had ceased to beckon. The pursuit of the big kudu had become an excuse for loafing through the bush, probing, learning, wondering, in a world of strange facts, where to be alive was all-sufficing, where obligation had no meaning. He reviewed the business of his profession with astonishment. It seemed meaningless fuss and bother, that old life. He could not delude himself he was necessary : there were too many doctors, all scrambling for a livelihood, and more qualifying every year. Much nicer to loaf and bask and watch the beasts that perish. It suddenly occurred to him that whatever gods might be would surely dwell in the place of their handiwork, afar from bricks and mortar, mechanical noises and artificial lighting. The prospect of dividing his days between stuffy surgery and patients’ sick-rooms filled him with disgust.

Plans formed in his mind. He would sell out, come up here and buy a farm, like Bryan Forbes. It would be difficult, of course : family, friends, obligations of all kinds, would combine to stop him. However, there was no need for hurry ; in this place hurry was unknown.

Acquiring the habit of reticence from his peculiar recreation, he said nothing about his change of heart. Only he followed his wilderness trails assiduously, with greater con-

centration, feeling there must be an end to his liberty. He was rewarded by a distant view of Malu. One evening he stood on the brink of a wide ravine into which a herd of eland had vanished. He was waiting for them to emerge on the farther bank, and had his binoculars focussed on a peaceful glade lit by the setting sun.

It was the magnificent kudu that appeared, walking with serene dignity into the field of vision. He stood in the midst of the glade looking about him, a wonderful picture of vital grace.

To Tracey this animal personified the freedom and beauty of the wilderness; he seemed the forest's darling child. But in the heart of him stirred that excited covetousness again, those sweeping spiral horns were like gold to a miser. After all, this was the purpose of his daily excursions, to get Malu. Between these two was war, it had been declared at first sight.

The bull was three hundred yards away and Tracey distrusted his marksmanship. He descended into the shelter of the ravine and began to stalk.

The buck no longer in view, he had doubts. It seemed unnecessarily destructive to shoot the creature; in this vacillation of purpose he really could not decide if he were a true hunter. Reason fortified him. What was the sense of spooring and trailing, meandering all day through hot dry bush, hiding in fly-infested dongas, if not to achieve some definite accomplishment? His training had been to consider dalliance waste, every endeavour should have its goal. He must shoot the kudu if possible; that was his reason for being here.

He climbed the opposite bank of the ravine to find the glade vacated. Malu had again given proof of his elusiveness. This failure reawakened Tracey's ardour; he began

to search for spoor like a bloodhound. But the ground was hard, indications were few, and darkness stopped the hunt for that day.

Tracey returned to the spot at dawn, determined to outwit the sagacious opponent and secure that magnificent trophy. Luck was with him, it seemed he had found Malu's favourite grazing-ground. Emerging from cover, he saw the bull standing knee-deep in grass a hundred yards away. His presence was unsuspected; it was the chance he had dreamed of.

As he raised the rifle once more compassion checked him. He thrust it aside. The hunter must be ruthless, it was the law of the wild.

At the shot Malu slumped to his knees and rolled over. Tracey was exultant: a clean kill. But when, a moment later, he stood looking down at the regal beast prostrate in defeat, his satisfaction ebbed, leaving remorse. Here was strength, beauty, vitality, turned to useless corruption by his wanton act. He marvelled at the killing-lust that had possessed him. Malu alive had been of joyful interest; Malu dead was merely a chapter closed. Tracey would have given much to undo this thing.

Bending to scrutinise the wound, he found that Malu was by no means dead, in fact he was but little hurt. The badly aimed bullet had struck the base of a horn, glanced across the top of the skull, and stunned the beast. Tracey's practised fingers investigated and found the bone unharmed. Malu would have nothing more serious than a headache to remind him of this adventure.

The sportsman rose to his feet intensely relieved. He chuckled softly. 'That will teach you to steal apples, you old reprobate!'

He discovered M'lefu standing just behind him. Evi-

dently the man had been following him, had heard the shot and come forward. Tracey was annoyed.

The Kamba was staring greedily at the buck. 'Good. You kill him !' he grunted.

'No,' said Tracey. 'He is not much hurt. In a few minutes he will recover.'

M'lefu bent to verify this. He caught hold of one horn, drawing a knife from his belt.

Tracey seized his wrist. 'No,' he said fiercely. 'Leave him alone. He shall go free.'

Plainly, M'lefu thought him crazy. 'Nyama !' he growled. 'Plenty meat !'

'My property,' Tracey assured him curtly. 'I say he shall go free.' He turned to walk back to the bushes. 'Come,' he ordered.

The native followed reluctantly.

Tracey heard a sound, and turned. The kudu was struggling to his feet ; three yards from him M'lefu stood poised, his spear swinging back for a cast.

'Stop !' yelled Tracey furiously. M'lefu took no notice ; his wild eyes glared at the dazed animal, his muscles tensed for the throw which would bury the long blade in that succulent flesh.

Tracey leapt forward, striking at the spear with his rifle. The weapon was at full cock in readiness for a defensive shot.

Suddenly M'lefu was sitting on the ground holding his hand to his chest, and Tracey's arm was tingling from the recoil of the discharged rifle. Incredulously, he realised that he had shot the man. M'lefu stared at him, mouthing unintelligibly ; then he fell back inert in the grass.

Malu had got to his feet. He regarded his enemy vacantly, and walked slowly off towards the bushes. The hunter stood as if hypnotised until the kudu had disappeared.



Tracey employed all his skill to save M'lefu's life. Later, he hurried to the farm for help; the wounded man was carried in and put to bed in the house.

Forbes reported the accident to the police at the township, but when a constable arrived to make enquiries M'lefu declared it no accident but a deliberate attempt on his life.

'Grievous wounding,' was what the Crown Prosecutor called it.

Tracey could find little to say in his defence, but proof of evil intent was lacking, and he escaped imprisonment. He admitted assaulting the man; it was held that in a fit of ungovernable rage he had pulled the trigger. The reason given for the attack appeared frivolous; evidently the hunter was infuriated at seeing his quarry escape, and blamed the native.

The night he was escorted on to the ship by a uniformed policeman, Tracey explained to Forbes: 'I am glad it happened. I was dreading return to the old routine, and this business has made it impossible. People will say I am ruined and disgraced, but I am liberated. My investments will bring me enough to live on as I want to live—in some other colony. Life is beginning for me, and it was Malu who did it. I shall always remember that old chap with gratitude.'

Forbes shook his head commiseratingly. He supposed Tracey to be making the best of a great misfortune. That his friend should be filled with the happiness of a school-boy beginning his holidays was beyond his comprehension.

Months later when Tracey wrote to him from Nyasaland extolling the country and his manner of life there, he still thought the man unfortunate, a social exile. But the one-time Johannesburg doctor, bearded and bronzed, dividing his time between healing the natives and studying the fauna, would not have changed places with the King's physician.

## TRAVELLING IN BYGONE ENGLAND.

BY SIR CHARLES PETRIE.

FOR those who are interested in travel, there has been of late years a new field opened up, namely the England of our ancestors. For several generations the Muse of History was a highbrow lady whose only interest lay in battles and treaties, kings and parliaments, and it is but recently that she has become more human in her tastes. In consequence, publishers and learned societies are now giving to the world letters and diaries relating the everyday life of ordinary people in the past, and many of these tell us what travelling was like in the age before trains and motor-cars. Indeed, from the beginning of the seventeenth century the subject is exceptionally well documented.

The first thing that strikes one about these contemporary narratives is the extremely slow progress which travellers made. In the reign of William and Mary it took Mrs. Manley six days to cover the 170 miles from London to Exeter, though it is only fair to add that one of them was a Sunday, on which even so 'advanced' a lady as she found it impossible, or impolitic, to proceed. Such being the case, it is little wonder that a writer in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in the middle of the eighteenth century should say: 'A rich citizen of London has perhaps some very valuable relatives or friends in the West; he thinks no more of visiting them than of travelling the deserts of Nubia, which might as well be in the moon, or in Limbo Patrum, considering them as a sort of separate being.' It was the same in all directions, and so late as the reign of George III, after many improvements

had been made, it took thirty hours to go from London to York, and cost £3 6s. 3d.

The reason for this was the bad state of the roads. Defoe, in his *Tour through England and Wales*, gives many instances, one of which is particularly remarkable : ' Going to church at a country village, not far from Lewes, I saw an ancient lady, and a lady of very good quality, I assure you, drawn to church in her coach with six oxen ; nor was it done in frolic or humour, but mere necessity, the way being so still and deep, that no horses could go in it.' This was in the third decade of the eighteenth century. The Sussex roads had, indeed, a specially bad reputation, and Defoe mentions one from Leatherhead by Dorking to Petworth, that had disappeared altogether during the previous hundred years, but they were probably no worse than those in most other counties. Such being the case, it is easy to understand the impression made upon contemporaries by the feat of Sir Robert Carey in riding the 397 miles from Richmond to Edinburgh in sixty hours to announce Elizabeth's death to James VI. Even more remarkable was the exploit of Nicks, the highwayman, in the reign of Charles II, for he robbed a man on Gad's Hill in Kent at four o'clock one morning, and was talking to the Lord Mayor of York in that city at eight the same evening.

For the poorer classes, who had neither conveyances nor horses of their own, there were wagons which jolted their way from village to village, for although the first stage-coach, from London to Coventry, made its appearance during the Protectorate, this method of transport was not much used for another century. Even for those who possessed carriages the discomfort must have been considerable, for in winter the main roads became such seas of mud that travellers were forced to take to the fields, while it was the usual practice of the local authorities to plough up the ruts each spring.

What is surprising is not that there were so few people travelling, but that there were so many.

It was in such an England that Lieutenant Hammond (his Christian name is unknown) set out on August 4th, 1635, from Norwich to visit the Southern and Western counties. His account of the journey has been published in a recent volume of the *Camden Miscellany*, but it deserves a wider public than it is likely to achieve in this modest form, for it is the last description we possess of an England which was so soon to be changed by the Civil War. For this reason it is not without interest to compare Hammond's description with that of Defoe ninety years later, and with that of Byng when the first effects of enclosures and the Industrial Revolution were already beginning to make themselves felt.

The three travellers differed greatly in character. Hammond was a happy, jovial man, who was always willing to talk to anyone whom he might meet, and he was equally ready to join in any fun that was afoot. He was a staunch supporter of Church and King, had a great respect for ceremonial and tradition, and entertained a hearty dislike of the Scots and Welsh. Defoe, on the other hand, looked at his world through the eyes of the special correspondent of a great newspaper born several generations before his time. His sympathies were with everything that he considered to be progressive, and he could never forget that in his youth he had trailed a pike with 'King Monmouth'; nor was he by any means above using his imagination to amplify his experiences. Byng, later the fifth Viscount Torrington, was yet another type, and was, it must be confessed, a good deal of a *laudator temporis acti*. A retired colonel, he possessed to the full all the virtues and defects of his profession, but what he saw he set down in his journal, however much it might have earned his disapproval.

For our forefathers, as for ourselves, the inn was the making or the marring of a journey. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries inns were still what they had been for ages. There were no bars, no set dinners, and no dining-rooms. The rich ordered what they wanted in their own rooms, while those who could not afford this fed in the kitchen. The tradition of good cheer, too, was already old, for as early as 1129 an Imperial diplomat wrote that 'the inns in England are the best in Europe.' Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that the country inn is the one unbroken link that connects the present with the remote past, for its life is the same as it was in the Middle Ages, in spite of all the changes that have taken place in the interval. The tavern scene in *Piers Plowman*, the conversation in the inn-yard in *Henry IV*, and the meeting of the Penny Club in Ben Jonson's *New Inn*, all might take place to-day. As a modern writer has so well said, 'To the inn time is static. In one breath it has seen all English history, and we of to-day are only late arrivals among its guests.'

Many of Hammond's experiences have a curiously modern ring. There can be few who, after a long journey, will not share his satisfaction in the 'holy quiet' which he found at the *Lamb* at Eastbourne, or cannot sympathise with his annoyance at Manningtree with the landlord who was 'out of his pleasant conceited noddle, very inquisitive to know from whence I came, and whither I was bound.' At the *Red Lion* at Portsmouth there was even a visitors' book to be signed, while the hostess was 'brisk, blithe, and merry, a handsome sprightly lass, fit for the company of brave commanders.' Hammond was clearly an easy-going fellow, and not too difficult to please, while Byng was the reverse. He was continually complaining of pert chambermaids, and sulky waiters; of dirty knives, and bad wine. On one occasion,

quite early in his travels, occurs the following outburst : ' I look upon an inn, as the seat of all roguery, profaneness, and debauchery ; and sicken of them every day, by hearing nothing but oaths, and abuse of each other, and brutality to horses.' Later, he found himself compelled to admit that there were exceptions, and where his cherished *Haycock* at Wansford was in question he was positively fulsome in his praise.

In effect, accommodation varied then as it does now, but the weight of the evidence would seem to show that on the whole the English inns were good, and vastly superior to anything on the Continent. We have all met our Byngs, and suffered from their company.

On the other hand, the modern traveller can go about in safety, and is under no necessity to note, as did Hammond on his way from Rochester to Canterbury, ' nor did we thinke our Purses were in any great perill of being taken from us, our Company was so strong.' Yet it is possible that the danger from highwaymen has been exaggerated. Defoe says nothing about them, and Byng has contempt, rather than pity, for those who were robbed ; according to him, the victims were often people who did not leave sufficient time for their journey, and would travel by night. Certain roads round London were generally unsafe, and Bagshot Heath and Maidenhead Thicket were notorious, while Kensington and Knightsbridge were infested with footpads who were often privates in the Guards off duty ; but Hammond, Defoe, and Byng travelled in many remote places without being molested. It is true that from time to time there were notorious hold-ups, such as the robbery of Louise de Querouaille on the Newmarket Road by Mobb, and extraordinary protection was given to distinguished foreigners, as in the case of the Prince of Tuscany, who had a large escort on his way from Plymouth to London in the reign of Charles II :

such incidents and precautions have, in retrospect, given rise to what may well be a false impression of the dangers that confronted the traveller. After all, if our descendants take the evidence of the newspapers alone, they will probably come to the conclusion that matrimony and flying were particularly hazardous enterprises in the early days of George VI, for they will hear mainly of those who came to grief in the one or the other. The number of highwaymen and footpads, too, probably rose and fell as the general prosperity of the country diminished or increased, and the close of a war always set adrift a number of men rendered desperate by their experiences or their misfortunes.

When we turn from the way in which our travellers proceeded on their journey to what they saw, all resemblance is at an end. Hammond was a witness of much that after a few more years had passed was never to be seen again. He could write of Corfe Castle, even now majestic in its ruins, 'It is so ancient as without Date, yett all her walls and Towers, the maine Castle called the Kings, the lower Castle called the Queens, the large Roomes therein, and the Leads aloft, are all in very good repayre.' He saw the paintings in Chichester Cathedral before they received the rude attentions of Waller and his men, and much that he was shown at Winchester no longer exists. It was the same with institutions as with buildings. Hammond was present at an Eyre of the Forest, which must have been one of the last of these courts ever held, for, recently revived by Charles I as a legal means of increasing the revenue, they were swept away as one of the consequences of the Great Rebellion. He gives a detailed account of the procedure, and of the charge of the Lord Chief Justice, adding 'by this time his Lordship (as he had good cause) was weary'd, and I (as I had just reason) with crowding and thrusting, was quite overyr'd.'

It was a very different England, and governed on very different principles, which Defoe traversed ninety years later. For his part, he had no doubt that the changes had been for the better, but there were more to come of which he might not have approved so cordially. The centres of industry were still in the South and West, and there was nothing to indicate even to so keen an observer that this might not be the case much longer. He prophesies, for example, that Frome in a few years 'is very likely to be one of the greatest and wealthiest inland towns in England.' Although London was already the magnet for people and goods, there were innumerable small centres of population with a vigorous life of their own. Especially was this the case with the seaport towns, for before the age of railways coastal shipping possessed very great economic importance. To these various ports came, by road or river, the merchandise of the interior, seeking the shortest route to the sea, which afforded the easiest, as well as the cheapest, means of transport. Defoe could still write of Manchester that it was 'one of the greatest, if not really the greatest, meer village in England. It is neither a wall'd town, city, or corporation; they send no members to Parliament, and the highest magistrate they have is a constable or headborough.' Yet he estimates its population at fifty thousand. Birmingham he did not consider worthy of mention, though Liverpool was already 'one of the wonders of Britain . . . there is no town in England, London excepted, that can equal Liverpoole for the fineness of the streets, and beauty of the buildings.'

Progress of the type that commended itself to Defoe was anathema to Byng. The former would have rejoiced at the continued growth of the Northern towns, while the latter, who visited Manchester in 1792, can hardly find words strong enough to express his dislike: 'Oh! what a dog hole is



Manchester ! For the old town is like Wapping ; and the upper, the new, town like Spital Fields—in the same gloom and dirt.’ Later he ‘wander’d about the town till dinner time, without seeing anything that I should ever wish to see again.’ Byng seems to have found Birmingham rather more congenial, but chiefly because on the occasion of his visit Mrs. Siddons was acting there, and he passed most of the evening in her dressing-room. The times were disturbed, and events across the Channel were not without their effect in the Midlands. The worthy colonel found his old regiment, the Blues, at Birmingham ‘quartered to maintain the peace.’ But they were not what they had been when he served with them : ‘I saw them parade in the High Street, and think I never saw a regiment in worse order, or looking less like soldiers, dirty, slovenly, ill-dressed, with neither fashion, nor pride about them ; and their horses were as dirty, and ill-dress’d as their riders.’

None of our three travellers has much to say about politics ; Defoe probably because he did not wish to offend potential readers, and the other two because they were not specially interested. Yet Hammond traversed an England that historians would have us believe was ablaze with indignation at the levying of Ship Money, and he says nothing about any such agitation : indeed, he concludes the account of his journey with the reflection that the country is fortunate ‘to live under soe good, soe just, soe wise, soe prudent, soe vertuous and soe piously religious a Prince’ as Charles I. Nothing is known of Hammond’s later life, but one can hardly doubt on which side he ranged himself when the Civil War came. Byng was of Whig stock, and during his earlier travels there are several sneering allusions to the administration of the Younger Pitt, but when the storm broke in France he became, like so many members of his party, a

supporter of the Prime Minister. Nevertheless, he was, if old-fashioned in his views, no mere blind reactionary, and on page after page he gives evidence of a genuine sympathy for the wretched victims of the enclosures : ' As a sportsman I hate enclosures, and, as a citizen, I look on them as the greedy tyrannies of the wealthy few to oppress the indigent many.' Nor has he anything but the utmost contempt for those politicians at Westminster who worked themselves into a fury about injustices in India, but cared nothing for the miseries of their fellow-countrymen at home. Defoe, progressive as he prided himself on being, seems to have felt no repugnance at the enclosing of common land.

Religion attracted all three rather more than politics. Hammond toured the country when Laud was enforcing discipline on the Church, and the Archbishop's policy pleased him. On the whole he seems to have met with little of which he disapproved, save the ' fat tunbelly'd puffy-quarter'd Chuffe ' non-preaching parson at Crowland, and the town of Banbury ' as full of Ale as Zeale, where they doe make no Conscience to translate an Altar to a Signe ; which in my judgement is a plaine signe to judge how they stand addicted.' Defoe was more interested in Dissent than in the Establishment, though he was glad to see at Dorchester ' the church of England clergyman, and the Dissenting minister, or preacher, drinking tea together, and conversing with civility and good neighbourhood, like catholick Christians, and men of a catholick and extensive charity.' What impressed Byng most was the rapid spread of Methodism consequent upon the neglect of their duties by so many Anglican clergymen. At Ashby-de-la-Zouch he noted, as in no way exceptional, ' a Methodist chapel . . . to which there went five to the one that went to church ; and no wonder, as here may be fervour and devotion.'

It was little marvel that such should be the case, for on the conclusion of his tour in the Midlands in 1789 he wrote, 'About religion I have made some enquiry (having been in so many churches) and find it to be lodged in the hands of the Methodists ; as the greater clergy do not attend to their duty, and the lesser neglect it ; that where the old psalm singing is abolished, none is established in its place ; as the organ is inconvenient, and not understood ; at most places the curates never attend regularly, or to any effect, or comfort, so no wonder that the people are gone over to Methodism.' It was, indeed, hardly remarkable, and there were times when Byng wished he had been a contemporary of Hammond : when he visited Salisbury was one of them : 'The close is comfortable, and the divines well seated ; but the house of God is kept in sad order, to the disgrace of our Church, and of Christianity. Whenever I see these things I wish for a return of the authority and Church government of a land. The church-yard is like a cow-common, as dirty and as neglected, and through the centre stagnates a boggy ditch.'

Hammond was more interested in monuments than in men, and it was only on such occasions as that on which he fell in with a party of French people that he paid any attention to the habits of those he met. With Defoe and Byng it was the opposite, and little escaped them. In the former's time, for instance, assemblies and assembly-rooms were just coming into fashion, and he has not a good word to say for them. He deplores their presence at Winchester : 'they are pleasant and agreeable to the young people, and sometimes fatal to them. . . . Winchester has its share of the mirth : may it escape the ill consequences.' One of the chief recommendations of Dorset was that such practices did not obtain, and in consequence the reputation of the ladies in that county seems 'to be better kept, guarded by better conduct, and

managed with more prudence.' Two generations later Byng also had something to say about assembly-rooms—namely, that they were so boring he was at a loss to understand why people frequented them. There is nothing strange in these diametrically opposed opinions, for it is by no means rare for one age to denounce as vicious what its successor merely considers dull.

Both the earlier travellers saw that old institution, the fair, in its hey-day. There was a most important one for poultry at Dorking, which provided employment for the whole district ; and there Defoe was struck by the size of the capons he saw, which were anything up to 6 lb. in weight, and sold for between 4s. and 4s. 6d. apiece. All over the country there were fairs held on fixed dates every year, and each was noted for some special commodity. It had also been the practice to engage servants at a fair, though by the time of George I the custom was beginning to die out. Where it survived those who wished to be hired held in their hands the implements of their craft, as the carters a whip, labourers a spade, and woodmen a bill. By Byng's time the smaller centres were giving ground before the larger, and he is often found deploring the decay of country towns, as in the case of Burford, ' a poor declining place, having lost the clothing trade, and almost the saddle business, once so famous.' This was one of the developments which marked the difference between the England of Byng and that of Hammond and Defoe.

Byng rode his own horse, and so did not experience the rapid changes that were taking place even while he was making his leisurely tours. In 1784 the coaches had begun to carry the mails, and five years later they were provided with springs, of which they had previously been innocent. The next step was the introduction of lighter vehicles ; and

before Byng died in 1813 he could, had he been so disposed, have gone from London to Brighton in eight hours at the cost of 15s. for a single fare. The gradual change in the speed of travelling, even by coach, can be gauged from the fact that in 1750 it took three days to go from London to Bath ; in 1776 Dr. Johnson started at 11 a.m., and arrived the next day at 7 p.m. ; while in 1827 Dickens makes his hero leave at 7 a.m., and arrive at 7.30 p.m. By then, however, the life of the roads which Hammond, Defoe, and Byng all knew was about to be stilled for two generations by the arrival of the railway, not to be revived until the motor-car came to resuscitate the habits of the past.

### WITH A BUNCH OF VIOLETS.

*All that I had was a dream  
That was better broken :  
All that I dreamt was a word  
Best left unspoken :  
All that I spoke—these three  
Treacherous proved to me.*

*So never again will I dream  
Life more than human :  
Never expect love to be  
More than a woman :  
And my songs will be perfect, and true,  
And all of them you.*

FRANK EYRE.

## *SQUIBS AND THE DRUIDS.*

BY M. DE B. DALY.

MRS. FERRIER HAVILAND entered her husband's workshop with a heightened colour on her rather prominent cheek-bones and a newspaper in her hand.

'Most extraordinary of Francis !' she exclaimed, tapping the paper peremptorily. 'Marrying again and not letting me know ! It was pointed out to me by Mrs. Bigelow at the Club. She had the impertinence to say she believed Lord Rocke was some sort of cousin of mine ! Some sort of cousin ! The head of my family !'

Captain and Mrs. Haviland, whose reverence for titles bordered on fanaticism, considered that Property and Family supported their claim to be the most important residents in the British community at Sant'Anna. When they had settled in Italy twenty years ago for Captain Haviland's health, they had chosen Sant'Anna chiefly because it had the hall-mark of approval from an English countess living there. They built a large villa, filled it with beautiful old Italian furniture, and called it (in delicate compliment to Mrs. Haviland's second cousin, the fourth Baron Rocke) La Rocca. A few years later the countess decided that a central-heated London flat was better than a chilly Italian palazzo, but her departure brought with it the consolation that Mrs. Haviland was recognised as the leader of society. Mrs. Bigelow's ignorance seemed almost insulting.

Captain Haviland sympathised sincerely, but being a man of pacific nature, distracted her from her grievance by comments on the peccant Lord Rocke.

‘Queer feller, Rocke. Never takes his seat in the House. Belongs to no club. Doesn’t shoot. Doesn’t hunt. Hard up, of course. Said to be a socialist. Anyway, manners must be rusty, or he’d have written. Who’s he marrying?’

‘An *Australian*! Of course she can’t be anybody, but I must try and say something nice.’

While Mrs. Haviland was concocting a letter which should combine cousinly reproach with moderate congratulation, an idea occurred to her. She immediately laid it before her husband.

‘How would it be, Fertier, as they are to be married in the summer, to lend them La Rocca for the honeymoon?’

He thought the idea excellent. So long as Rocke didn’t go messing with his carpentering tools. Mrs. Haviland was sure the bride and bridegroom could not take it amiss if the workshop were locked, and, thus safeguarded, the offer was made.

Lord Rocke’s answer was disappointing, for an allusion to a very quiet wedding did not even imply an invitation to it, and the honeymoon was to be spent in Ireland. Fortunately, however, he concluded with a request which gave Mrs. Haviland the desired opportunity of knitting closer the ties of kinship.

‘I wonder,’ wrote Lord Rocke, ‘whether you know anywhere in your neighbourhood where my daughter Stephanie could board and have good sea-bathing while we are away? She is a dear girl and quite presentable. I should like you to see her, but of course by then you will have left.’

The Havilands always closed their house in May, spent the season in London, and were seen at Ascot, Henley, Lord’s, Wimbledon and, above all, at the Royal Garden-party. It was therefore not surprising that Captain Haviland should consider his wife’s proposal to stay in Sant’Anna for

a young girl's convenience almost revolutionary. Mrs. Haviland saw the matter required careful handling.

'I have been thinking for some time, Ferrier,' she said, not quite accurately, 'that London would be too much for you this year. You remember Dr. Field said, "Don't tire yourself; don't stand on your game leg; have plenty of sun and air." How can we manage that in London in the season? Everyone says it is lovely here in June and July. We could invite Stephanie for a long visit, go to Salso for treatment for your leg, and then to Scotland.'

Captain Haviland did not like the idea at all, but he was nervous about his health, and after a few protests gave in with a good grace.

Not even to her husband did Mrs. Haviland confide her ulterior motive. Stephanie, though by now twenty, had never been presented. Who could perform this important social duty better than a cousin? Mrs. Haviland was parsimonious in small matters, but lavish in those she considered important; she decided to offer to pay her own and the girl's expenses at a next year's drawing-room. After that, even the ignorant Mrs. Bigelow of Sant'Anna could not ignore her aristocratic connections. A streak of caution made her want to inspect her young cousin before committing herself. There was no need to say anything to Ferrier at present, or, if she did not like the girl, at all.

At her last luncheon party of the season, Mrs. Haviland's guests were surprised to learn that she and her husband were renouncing the London season in order to receive the Honourable Stephanie Coulson at Sant'Anna.

'Of course it is rather a sacrifice,' she said, 'but I really couldn't refuse my cousin Francis—Lord Rocke, you know. He is so anxious we should have her while he is on his honeymoon, and says he cannot be grateful enough to us.'



Her guests agreed that his lordship had every reason for gratitude.

The La Rocca luncheon parties were famous, though not altogether in the way Mrs. Haviland supposed. Everybody, she admitted, could not have their own good fortune in being both well born and well off, but her guests must always be one or the other, or (better still) own a title. Sir Joseph Hutton was an extremely dull old man with an ear-trumpet, but to criticise one whom his sovereign had delighted to honour would have been *lèse majesté*. Miss Bilkington, of Bilkington Hall, Wilts, was an elderly, ugly, and pompous woman of undistinguished family but great wealth; she took a whole floor of the best hotel, and lived there for five months of the year in all the luxury her long purse could provide. These and other guests shared, in greater or less degree, the Havilands' reverence for Property and Family.

Captain and Mrs. Haviland would have been astonished to learn that in a younger and more democratic section of the community they were nicknamed the Druids.

## II.

Charles Philipson ran lightly up the Tiger Rock, stood for a moment poised on the Tiger's left ear, and then, with raised arms and thin, taut body bent into a slender bronze sickle, dived off it into the Mediterranean. It was such a clean dive that the waters stirred little more than if cleft by a blade. The glittering surface closed over him and swayed in endless rhythm as if still inviolate. A few minutes later, at the sea-level of the Tortoise Rock, on which several copper-coloured figures lay stretched in attitudes of indolence, Charles's head appeared from below. Cursing the slippery brown weed, he drew himself slitheringly up on to the

dry surface, and sank flat on his back with outstretched arms.

‘Gosh ! That was gorgeous ! The sea’s like liquid satin !’

‘Or honey that isn’t sticky,’ agreed a muffled voice coming from a prone figure lying on its face.

‘How could satin be liquid ? How could honey not be sticky ?’ Sybilla Morton, the only alert one of the company, always asked questions, and usually those which no one wanted to answer. Her figure, delightfully revealed by a bathing dress consisting of little more than a few emerald green straps, was sheer poetry, but her nature was prosaic.

‘Oh, hark at her !’ cried Charles. ‘Or rather, don’t hark at her, but listen to me ! Have you heard the news ?’

A galvanic movement of bodies, a lifting of heads, and a murmur of voices showed that even bathers replete with sun and sea were not quite devoid of curiosity.

‘The Druids are having a visitor !’ Charles announced solemnly.

‘Good lord, is that all ? They can have the whole of Debrett and welcome !’ Heads and bodies relaxed.

‘Wait ! That is not all ! The Druids’ visitor is a girl, and she’s coming to bathe with our crowd !’

Charles had his effect. There was a chorus of protest, and Pat Frere, with legal aspirations, summed up the case.

‘Any ordinary girl is welcome, especially if she’s decent-looking and can do a spot of diving, but an interloper from the Druid strongholds, no ! No ! Who is responsible ?’

‘Jennifer couldn’t help herself,’ Jennifer’s husband declared, sitting up to squeeze water from his hair ; ‘the Arch-Druidess met her, and was so matey that Jay at once knew she wanted something. Sure ’nough !’

‘To plant her visitor on us!’

‘Yes. Her “Cousin Rocke’s girl.”’

‘A genuine young Druidess! Double-dyed! Treble distilled! Blue blood that won’t tan! Brothers at Eton!’

Charles became defensive. ‘I’ve known Etonians with quite passable sisters.’

‘It’s an appalling risk,’ objected Pat. ‘Why didn’t Jennifer say we were scrofulous?’

Jennifer, emerging from the water, demanded and received an explanation. It ended with an accusation.

‘The fact is, Jennifer, my dear, you and Charles are too grand!’

‘Grand! You know where we live! And how we work!’

‘Charles’s father is an Admiral, your grandfather is a baronet!’

This was hitting below the belt, and Jennifer loyally declared that both were dears.

Sybilla had been listening rather impatiently to this airy trifling, and now began, ‘But seriously . . .’ Someone threw a clot of damp seaweed at her, and she amended her remark.

‘But really, tell us more about this girl. What’s her name? When’s she coming? How long will she stay?’

‘Her name,’ said Jennifer patiently, ‘is Stephanie Coulson. She’s arriving on Thursday. She’ll be here several weeks. And that’s all I know.’

Charles shook his head at the hopeful suggestion that the young Druidess had committed a crime and was being pushed abroad till it should be forgotten in Druid circles. ‘Lord Rocke is marrying again, and the lass wants to recover from the shock.’

Pat cheered up. ‘Well, failing a crime, a wicked step-mother is an extenuating circumstance. Is the stepmother

wicked? Sure to be. And the girl beautiful? Of course she is. Let us be kind to her.'

Jennifer said rather dismally, 'I hope she won't be shocked at our manners and costumes.'

'I'll mend this hole.' Sybilla was always practical.

'Darling Syb, don't overdo it. Dressiness is out of place on the Animal Rocks. She must take us as she finds us.'

'Let's go in.' Charles thought it time to attend to essentials, of which bathing was one, and a stray girl was not. A moment later the Tortoise Rock was deserted and the sea around it frothing and bubbling over the intruders. Their light-hearted frolics were as merry and inconsequent, though not as silent, as those of a shoal of dolphins.

Pat Frere, who was last to dive, called down to Jennifer before he plunged:

'I came here for the simple life. If your young Druid has scarlet toe-nails and silver hair, I shall swim out to the Elephant Rock and leave you to it.'

### III.

Neither Captain nor Mrs. Haviland knew anything about young people except that they had altered (very much for the worse) since they were young themselves. They expected their visitor to be modern, but had the haziest idea of what the word meant. They were, however, determined to be broad-minded.

'I suppose she will want cocktails,' Captain Haviland remarked lugubriously. He was an abstemious man and disliked seeing women drink spirits. Mrs. Haviland's thoughts flew to the price of alcohol.

'Oh, surely,' she exclaimed, 'she could manage with vermouth?' This innocuous beverage was always handed round before the famous luncheon parties.

'If she's been used to cocktails, cocktails she must have,' replied her husband firmly, 'but I sincerely trust she won't wear shorts. I abominate female knees.'

'She is Rocke's daughter and not a professional tennis-player. Girls in our class know how to dress.'

'H'm.' Captain Haviland had seen pictures which made him dubious. 'If girls are modern enough, nothing is too much—or too little—for them to wear.' Under the influence of his joke he cheered up. 'However, the thing's done, and we must put up with her.'

'I hope I didn't make a mistake in asking the Philipsons to look after her,' his wife said; 'they themselves are all right (Mrs. Philipson was a Hazeldean), but they have some rather queer friends.'

'Of course you couldn't know all those literary and artistic people in England, but it doesn't matter out here, and Mrs. Charles will chaperone her.'

Captain Haviland had the old-fashioned idea that any married woman protects the morals and reputation of the unmarried.

'Of course,' added his wife consolingly, 'I only asked her definitely for a month. Then, if we find her tiresome, we'll say it's too hot, and go on to Salso.'

When Stephanie Coulson arrived she did not seem likely to prove tiresome. She was a small, brown-haired girl, with a good complexion, beautiful eyes, and delicate features which Mrs. Haviland called aristocratic. Her quick, light movements seemed to make her dance as she walked, and her face glowed with life and merriment. She used a great deal of slang, and had a large supply of often singularly inappropriate adjectives. Mrs. Haviland was relieved to find that her young cousin maintained class prestige by not wearing shorts. She never discovered that Stephanie only

did not do so because her dress allowance was small and her taste fastidious—creased or ill-cut shorts being, in her opinion, hell.

Captain Haviland duly offered his guest a cocktail. She thanked him politely, but refused it, saying :

‘I had one once. It was the foulest muck. I daresay yours aren’t, Cousin Ferrier, but if you don’t mind I’d rather not risk it.’

Although it seemed a pity that a young girl (at least if the daughter of a peer) should express herself like a school-boy, Captain Haviland condoned this for the excellence of the sentiment. Mrs. Haviland wondered if the wine-merchant would take back the bottles.

Some minor shocks were inevitable.

‘I hope you slept well, Stephanie?’ Mrs. Haviland asked when the girl appeared for breakfast the day after her arrival. She did not answer for a moment, and then, as no one spoke, she said :

‘Who? Me? Oh, I’m sorry, Cousin Isobel, but I’m not called Stephanie. My name is Squibs.’

‘I should have said your name is Stephanie, but you are called Squibs,’ Captain Haviland corrected her rather ponderously. ‘Well, my dear, we shall be pleased to call you by your family nickname, although it’s a little peculiar. I trust Miss Squibs slept well?’

‘Yes, rather, I always do. But it’s not only a family name. Everybody calls me Squibs.’

And so they did. Letters arrived most improperly addressed to Miss Squibs Coulson, the La Rocca servants, who thought her perfection, soon called her ‘la Signorina Squeebse,’ and before the acquaintance was a day old all the bathers at the Animal Rocks knew her only as Squibs. They quite forgot she was a Druid.

## IV.

Squibs was interested in everything and everybody. In La Rocca, Cousin Ferrier and Cousin Isobel, in their priceless Italian servants, in the Philipsons, and the Philipsons' friends, and the frightfully marvellous bathing ; all were wonderful to her. The dear old funnies, though not quite as thrilling as the bathers, were perfect old pets. Cousin Ferrier, so important with his carpentering, was the weirdest darling, and Cousin Isobel, always writing unnecessary letters, so that she might enclose them in others, with English stamps to save postage, was gorgeous. Words almost failed her in admiration of Jennifer, whose tall, straight figure, regular features, and shining black hair she thought absolutely heavenly. Charles (*actually* when not convalescing from pneumonia employed on the staff of a London paper !) was really, with his bronzed body and flaxen hair, quite too romantic—no wonder everyone was goopy about him, but of course he and Jennifer simply adored each other.

Mrs. Haviland sometimes talked of going down to the bathing beach, but in the end always preferred a wicker chair under her pergola to a camp stool on a shadeless rock. Thus for a time Squibs managed to make the best of two worlds. She enjoyed the luxury of La Rocca, where she chattered gaily about people who seemed only to have Christian names, and was much more considerate to her elders than they had expected. Every morning she raced down to the bathing beach, swam and dived in the shimmering water, or soaked in sunshine on the rocks. La Rocca was forgotten until the luncheon hour drew near. Then, exclaiming that she was simply famishing, she flung herself into her clothes in an incredibly short time, sprang up the hill like a young gazelle, and when the gong sounded was in the hall

looking as if she had spent the whole morning over her toilet.

The first clash between her worlds came one morning when Mrs. Haviland and Squibs were finishing breakfast on the loggia. Captain Haviland had already gone to his workshop.

'By Gosh! I promised to ring up!' exclaimed Squibs. 'Will you excuse me, Cousin Isobel?' and at a nod from her cousin she jumped up and ran indoors. Mrs. Haviland could hear every word from where she sat.

'I say, are you Peter Davey? . . . Well, look here, Jennifer says, come down to the Animal Rocks this morning. . . . We'll all be there. . . . Splendid! . . . Oh, it's Squibs speaking, Squibs Coulson, but you don't know me. . . . We'll meet in the water. . . . Righto!'

Mrs. Haviland rose and her hair almost rose too as she threw down her napkin and went into the hall.

'Who are you speaking to, Squibs?' she demanded.

'A bloke called Peter Davey, Cousin Isobel. He is——'

'I know quite well who Peter Davey is. I heard that Dr. Field's nephew was expected. He is a nobody. It is most unsuitable that you should speak of yourself to an unknown young man as Squibs. To any young man, in fact. You should say "Miss Coulson."'

'Oh, Cousin Isobel, I couldn't! I should split! "Miss Coulson wants to speak to Mr. Davey on the telephone!"'

Mrs. Haviland did not laugh.

'Nicknames are not suitable between strangers, and I can't think why your father lets you use a word like "bloke."'

'He doesn't, and I won't if you don't like it, Cousin Isobel. And I'll try and remember to call myself "Miss Coulson" every time I telephone to people I don't know.'



This handsome offer closed the incident.

At lunch that day Squibs mentioned that Peter Davey had brought quite a decent friend called Lord Bill. Mrs. Haviland, whose thumbs pricked at the most distant allusion to an aristocrat, asked for information.

'I dunno who he is,' replied Squibs, who cared less. 'They call him Lord William, or Lord Bill, or William, or Bill. He's quite a nobby bl—— I mean chap, with a priceless red rubber boat.'

Mrs. Haviland already foresaw relationship with a duke or at worst a marquess, and decided not to go down to the bathing beach. It would be better to make the young man's acquaintance more formally. Squibs could tell her nothing about him except that his rubber boat was too wizard for words. Mrs. Haviland, after trying vainly to track him through the mazes of Debrett, postponed enquiries. At the first possible moment Squibs should invite him to La Rocca, where the stately house and lovely grounds would have their value.

For several days Squibs prattled gaily about Bill and his boat. Her cousins began to think that, after all, the informal habits of the bathers, hitherto deplored, might be useful. The opportunity to send an invitation soon came.

'We went right round Capo Bruno,' babbled Squibs; 'the boat wobbled frightfully, and we upset twice, but we landed at Cersiana, and had iced doodahs in our bathing suits at a café with pink oleanders all round.'

'At a café in your bathing suits!'

'Yes, a scream, because the walls were plastered with notices saying people in bathing dresses wouldn't be served! Nobody had much more. Some had less. It is awkward having no pockets. Poor Bill had to telephone to Sant'Anna

for credit. My goodness, how we whacked in when he got it !’

Mrs. Haviland smiled tolerantly.

‘Then you must return his hospitality, Squibs. It was very kind of him to give you so many iced—so many ices !’

‘Oh, what’s a few ices ?’ asked Squibs lightly. ‘But I’ll tell him to roll along to a feed one day, shall I ? He’s not a bad lad. By the way, he’s heard of your marvellous glass.’

Captain and Mrs. Haviland glowed with pride. Their Venetian glass was very beautiful, and it was gratifying to learn that its fame had reached the highest circles.

‘Ask him to supper on Thursday, dear, and he shall see it. I like a young man to be interested in the artistic.’

Mrs. Haviland and Marco, the chef, took a great deal of trouble about the menu for Thursday’s supper, and Captain Haviland discussed the wines several times with the butler.

The two men-servants were confirmed in their conviction that the English were incomprehensible.

‘All this for the giovane Lord !’ exclaimed Marco. ‘No doubt a *bravissimo ragazzo*, but to be received like this at La Rocca. *Per Bacco !*’

‘Do you mind not dressing to-night, Cousin Ferrier ?’ asked Squibs, when the day came. ‘Bill’s not brought a dinner-jacket. They wear any old thing here in the summer.’

Captain Haviland, though he deplored the decadence of the English gentleman, who apparently no longer dressed for dinner in the desert, agreed to wear a white suit.

‘There he is !’ cried Squibs, as they waited in the drawing-room for the guest. ‘I’ll go and fetch him along, lest he should be all of a dither !’

She ran out, and a minute later reappeared, unceremoniously pulling in a fair-haired, stocky young man with an intelligent face.

'Here's Mr. Lord, Cousin Isobel !' she said, remembering her manners.

Mrs. Haviland, stately in mauve brocade, with her husband rather like a drooping white eagle behind her, had advanced with outstretched hand. She now dropped it, colour flooded her face, and she stood speechless, her mouth open, her jaws working in a vain effort to express her emotion.

'Ferrier, it's Lord's son !' she gasped at last, and then, to the young man, 'How abominable ! How dare you !'

Captain Haviland's eyeglass dropped the length of its black ribbon, but he said nothing.

The young man, absolutely bewildered, looked from his hostess to Squibs and from Squibs to his hostess.

'But—but——' he stammered, 'didn't Squibs tell you ? Squibs, you did, didn't you ?'

'Tell them what, you gumph ?' cried Squibs. 'Are you all mad ?'

The guest turned to Captain Haviland.

'I am sorry, sir. I supposed Squibs knew all about it, though I never actually mentioned it. It is all so long ago. She told you my name, and when she brought your kind invitation,—he gave a little courteous, foreign-bow to his hostess—'I thought that you wished to know that the past was the past.'

'The past !' exclaimed Captain Haviland. 'It is the present too ! You are who you are. We can't reproach you with your father's failings, but you must admit you are not a suitable guest in this house.'

'Why ever not ?' burst in Squibs. 'What's poor Bill done ? And what's his father got to do with it ?'

'If you imagine you are going to sit at my table, young Lord, you are quite mistaken !' cried Mrs. Haviland. 'The only place for you in my dining-room is behind my chair !'

‘ Oh, come, come, Isobel ! ’ expostulated Captain Haviland ; ‘ I always heard that Lord’s son had done very well, and shaken off his unfortunate family——’

William Lord interrupted him vehemently.

‘ Not at all, sir ! My father is dead, and I have been adopted by an uncle, but I am here to see my mother——’

‘ We are not interested in your family affairs ! ’ Mrs. Haviland said scornfully. Her husband did not let her continue.

‘ It has been a most unfortunate misunderstanding——’ he began, but the young man interrupted him without much ceremony.

‘ Yes, sir. I am delaying your supper, and I will leave you now to enjoy it. Good night, Squibs, it wasn’t your fault.’

‘ If you won’t stay, I won’t either ! Food here would choke me ! ’ Squibs cried. ‘ I’ll go down to Jennifer ! ’

Bill Lord patted her arm.

‘ Don’t be a silly little ass. You can’t leave your cousins’ house in the middle of the night. Be a good girl.’ He had gone almost before he had finished speaking.

Squibs, two bright red spots glowing in her cheeks, turned furiously to her cousins.

‘ What’s it matter who Bill’s father was ? He had a rotten time in the old war, and if he *did* drink afterwards, I don’t blame him ! Better than staying at home and making money like that awful old Sir Joseph ! ’

‘ Young Lord made one sensible remark,’ Mrs. Haviland said scathingly. ‘ You certainly can’t leave here in the night, but you had better go home as soon as we can make arrangements. Your behaviour——’

She was about to qualify it, but Captain Haviland spoke first.

‘There is no need to discuss this now, Isobel. Let us have supper, and say nothing about it till the morning. By then we shall all have had time to get over this very unpleasant incident.’

‘I do not require supper,’ began Mrs. Haviland, and then remembered the servants, ‘but I suppose we had better go into the dining-room. Ferrier, tell Antonio that our guest has—unfortunately—’ she gulped over the word—‘had to go home. They can serve at once.’

Captain Haviland went to do her bidding, and his wife, disappointed and humiliated, all her plans of present and future grandeur shattered, turned almost viciously to her young cousin.

‘That’s your gratitude for all I’ve done for you! You insult me by bringing as a guest to my house the son of our drunken butler!’

Squibs was so surprised that she almost forgot her anger.

‘So that’s what it’s all about!’ she exclaimed. ‘Bill’s father was your butler! The one that drank! Oh, poor Bill! He *did* say his father had told him about your glass!’ She began to laugh, but stopped short when Mrs. Haviland, infuriated at her amusement, almost shouted at her:

‘Yes, nice people your beloved bathing friends know! William Lord is the son of a drunken butler and an Italian dressmaker—in fact, a half-breed!’

‘Oh! Oh! Oh! I won’t bear it!’ cried Squibs, and ran out of the room with a wail of anguish, nearly knocking down Captain Haviland as he entered.

‘What is it now?’ he asked. ‘I hoped the child would be sensible.’

‘I told her I didn’t approve of her half-breed friend.’

‘That was an unfortunate expression, Isobel.’

Well, he *is* a half-breed, isn’t he?’

‘To that extent, my dear, so are many people. Even most Royalty!’

This observation was like a cold douche on Mrs. Haviland.

‘The servants will think it strange if we don’t go in,’ she said, recalling her British regard for appearances. She rather lamely told Antonio that Signorina Stefania had gone to bed with a headache and Marietta must take her up a plate of soup. Husband and wife heroically talked platitudes until after Antonio had served coffee on the loggia. Mrs. Haviland then came to the point.

‘Of course Squibs must go home.’

‘I suppose so,’ her husband agreed sadly. He too had his disappointment, for since Squibs had been at La Rocca he had felt younger, the sun had shone more brightly, the world seemed gayer. He had even dreamed that she might make her home with them.

‘It would be a pity to exaggerate,’ he began tentatively.

‘Exaggerate, Ferrier! That would be difficult! Flirting with the son of a drunken butler! Bringing him to the house under false pretences! Making out he was the son of a Duke!’

Captain Haviland’s sense of fair play rebelled, and he spoke quite sharply.

‘Nonsense, Isobel! I have seen no signs of flirting. Rather tomboy behaviour, perhaps. I am convinced that Squibs had no idea of our mistake. I imagine the young man is called Lord Bill in reference to the Italian way of putting the surname first.’

‘I see you are determined to defend Squibs and her common admirer,’ Mrs. Haviland replied coldly, ‘but she must go!’

‘You can’t turn Rocke’s girl out of the house!’

‘Of course not. We will tell Francis that we are going to

Salso earlier than we had intended. I will book rooms from next Monday, and get Squibs' ticket for the same day. But before she goes I will tell her what I think of her !'

Captain Haviland sighed.

'You—you'll be considerate, Isobel. She's young. Don't be severe with the child.'

'One can hardly be too severe on behaviour of that sort in a girl of our class. *Noblesse oblige* ! I shall, of course, be just, and you may be sure I shall be as considerate as she deserves.'

She went indoors to write to Salso and to ponder carefully how to be at once severe, just, and considerate.

## V.

Marietta staggered up under a tray laden with all the delicacies of the supper table. It gave her the keenest pleasure to disobey her instructions, as she was convinced that the Signora's 'plate of soup' was intended as a punishment.

Squibs, her face buried in pillows as she lay face downwards on her bed, did not hear Marietta knock or enter, but when she spoke turned a tear-stained face to her.

'Courage, Signorina !' said Marietta in a mysterious whisper, 'it will all come right ! Do not despair !'

Squibs, hastily brushing her arm across her face, looked at her in surprise. Marietta spoke a mixture of French, Italian, and English which Squibs understood quite well, but she could not imagine what she meant. 'It will be all right !' repeated Marietta, still whispering, and looking guiltily at the door and window. 'I will help you ! I will take a note to him ! Write it quickly ! He shall have it to-night !'

Marietta was amazed, because the Signorina, after looking

at her in a puzzled way, broke into peals of almost hysterical laughter.

‘You are an angel, Marietta,’ Squibs said at last. ‘But I won’t bother you. I say, what heavenly food ! Poor Bill, what he’s missing !’

Marietta returned to the kitchen thinking that Signorina Squibs was as strange as other English. Instead of bewailing her love-affair, and allowing herself to be tempted to a few mouthfuls, she was bubbling with merriment as she made heavy inroads on the *insalata russa*. The kitchen staff decided that the Signorina’s admirer must be hiding in the garden, ready to talk to her as soon as the house was quiet.

Squibs, having forgotten that food would choke her, enjoyed her supper in the most prosaic way, went to bed and to sleep. She woke early, however, feeling that the world, in spite of the sunshine glittering through the bougainvillea, was somehow out of joint, and only Jennifer could set it right.

With Squibs to think was usually to act, and in a few moments she had thrown on some clothes and was racing down the road to Villa Carlotta. Jennifer listened quietly to her story and then said :

‘You must remember they are Druids.’

Squibs pricked up her ears.

‘Somebody once said something about Druids, and you shut them up.’

‘Because they were your aged relatives. But it’ll help you to understand.’ She explained.

Squibs crowed with delight.

‘Gee ! Isn’t that grandiose ! Dear stuffy old Druids ! Funny old Druids ! You know, they really are quite lambs sometimes, and Daddy Druid is a darling !’

After she had allowed her fancy to play round pictures of Cousin Ferrier with a wreath of mistletoe and Cousin Isobel



crowned with oak-leaves, they considered the problem before them.

Squibs was enchanted by an invitation to share the penuries of Villa Carlotta until she wanted to go home. Her capacity for enjoyment was unlimited. The marbles, mosaics, frescoes, parquets, and large household staff of La Rocca had been heavenly, but it would be terribly exciting to live in a shabby little house and help Jennifer to help Filomena with the work. Then she braced herself for the ordeal of apology.

‘Well, I must be off to Stonchenge, and I’ll come back as soon as I politely can.’

Captain and Mrs. Haviland were at breakfast on the loggia when Squibs, very red in the face, appeared, and blurted out :

‘I’m sorry I spoke as I did, Cousin Isobel.’

‘I accept your apology, Stephanie, but that is not all. Your behaviour has been most unsuitable.’ Mrs. Haviland, her husband’s eye upon her, was trying to be lenient.

‘Yes, I’m afraid I *am* rather unsuitable, Cousin Isobel. You don’t approve of me, and I’d better not stay any longer. You’ve been most frightfully kind. Thank you so much.’

Mrs. Haviland felt like an outmanœuvred general. She had not had a chance to tell the girl to go. She said with much dignity :

‘Your Cousin Ferrier and I had already decided that it was better for us to part. We are leaving for Salso on Monday, and you can start for England the same day. Then there will be no fuss.’

Squibs, with a sigh of relief that her scolding was over so easily, flung herself into a chair.

‘Of course not. I hate fusses, don’t you? But please, you mustn’t alter your plans because of me. Jennifer and Charles have asked me to stay with them. Aren’t they angel-monkey-faces?’

It was a bombshell. The shattering of Mrs. Haviland's plans for next year's drawing-room and of her dreams of a ducal alliance had been bad enough, but no one knew of them ; if the Honourable Stephanie went from the palatial La Rocca to the humble little Villa Carlotta her flirtation with the butler's son would be common gossip. Yet she could not reasonably forbid Squibs to accept the invitation. Outwardly calm, but inwardly furious, she said stiffly :

‘ That, of course, will be delightful for you.’

## VI.

Five months later guests were assembling at La Rocca for the first luncheon party of the season. Mrs. Haviland had been enormously relieved to find that any gossip which Squibs' behaviour might have caused had been forgotten by the time the more elect English residents returned. The whole affair, she thankfully told herself, was over and done with.

Vermouth was already being handed round when the door opened to admit Miss Bilkington, of Bilkington Park, who had only recently returned to Sant'Anna. She seemed to have yet another chin and to be larger than ever ; her tiers of massive flesh were clad in unnecessarily close-fitting iron-grey cloth, and she sailed across the shining parquet with all the majesty of a super-dreadnought.

‘ So sorry, dear Mrs. Haviland,’ her deep voice boomed out, ‘ I'm afraid I'm a little late ! Some papers to sign—so tiresome ! But how charming to see you again ! And looking so well ! Captain Haviland, younger than ever ! How delightful ! ’

The opening amenities being over and lunch begun, Miss Bilkington again held the floor. It was, indeed, difficult for other conversation to be heard when she was speaking.

‘I met a distant cousin of yours the other day, Captain Haviland. Or was it some connection of your wife’s? Lord Rocke——’

‘The head of my family,’ Mrs. Haviland put in with as chilly an inflection as may be permitted to a guest. Sir Joseph Hutton, deafer than ever and his garrulity still more senile, heard the name, and pounced on it in the hawk-like way he did whenever, poor old man, he could catch a word.

‘What’s that? Rocke? Lord Rocke? Been staying near his place. Poisonous fellow, poisonous, poisonous! Socialist. Married a rich woman. Trust a socialist, ha, ha! Spending her money on his cottages! Hard luck on other landowners. Taps, baths, electric light! What do cottagers want with ’em?’

It was quite impossible to stop him, but efforts to drown him were more successful. All the guests began to talk busily. Miss Bilkington, of course, was best able to cope with the situation, and Sir Joseph’s indiscreet meanderings soon petered out under her broadside. Unfortunately the remedy proved almost worse than the disease.

‘Your cousin—your wife’s cousin, I should say—told me how pleased they all were about his daughter’s engagement. Very unworldly of them, I’m sure! He likes the young fellow so much! No money. Nobody seems to mind. But of course you know all about it, as she met him here, didn’t she? Staying with you, I believe? How charming for you, dear young things.’

Captain Haviland sat, a picture of astonishment, but his wife, after a lightning survey of future relations with her noble cousin, plunged heroically.

‘Yes, quite a romance, wasn’t it? A very fine young fellow. We knew him when he was a little boy, but had not seen him since. They say he will go far.’

Sir Joseph being now headed off, it was possible to introduce the far less contentious subject of politics ; in that, at least, there was no possibility of divergence of opinion among La Rocca guests. As they left they all said what a splendid hostess Mrs. Haviland was, so bright and animated, so charming to all, so clever at keeping the ball rolling. None suspected what it had cost the mistress of La Rocca to sustain her reputation.

A weaker woman would have collapsed after the departure of the last guest. Mrs. Haviland, hardly waiting to consult her husband, sat down to write a letter. It was very similar to one she had written before, but this time she had her reward by return of post.

‘ MY DEAR COUSIN ISOBEL ’ [wrote Squibs]

‘ It’s too angelic of you both, after all the bother I was and all. We’re hugely happy, and it’s all due to your invitation ! But you’ve got it wrong. Bill’s only to be best man, it’s Patrick Frere who’s taking me on for keeps. Pat’s almost a barrister, and he says the great advantage is that it’s a brief career ! He’s awfully witty. My love to dear Cousin Ferrier, and I’ll answer his pet of a note to-morrow. I don’t want to miss a post.

‘ Your loving

‘ SQUIBS.

‘ P.S. Yes, we’re going to be married in June, and we’d simply adore to come to La Rocca for the honeymoon.’

Mrs. Haviland gave a sigh of relief. She handed the letter to her husband, saying hopefully :

‘ The law’s respectable, and after all, perhaps he’s one of the Southshire Freres ! ’

*Bordighera.*

## RONA.

BY ALASDAIR ALPIN MACGREGOR.

SITUATED in the North Atlantic, at a distance of forty-four miles north-north-east from the Butt of Lewis and of forty-five miles west of Cape Wrath, is the Island of North Rona, referred to in ancient times as Ronay. If we exclude Rockall, which is little more than a dot of rock rising some seventy feet out of the Atlantic wastes roughly a hundred and eighty-four miles west of St. Kilda, and which Captain Basil Hall (*circa* 1810) described so aptly as 'the most isolated speck in the world,' this Isle of the Seals (for such is the meaning of Rona, *ròn* being the Gaelic for a seal) may be regarded as the loneliest of the British Isles.

Rona forms part of Barvas, one of the northern parishes of Lewis, in the Outer Hebrides. It is lonelier far than the St. Kilda group of islands, for, though some years have elapsed since the St. Kildans were transferred to the mainland of Scotland, the *Hebrides* and her sistership, the *Dunara Castle*, two well-found vessels sailing from Glasgow by circuitous routes, pay frequent visits during the summer months to Hirta, the largest island of the St. Kilda group, and the one on which man had contrived to exist continuously for at least a thousand years. Only once a year, and then but for a few hours' duration, does Rona occupy man's vision, and feel the weight of man's feet; and that is when the men from Ness—that rugged and densely populated promontory on which the Hebrideans cultivate what is regarded as the most fertile soil in the Outer Isles—sail thither usually in July,

mainly to attend to the sheep owned by a certain Mr. Alexander MacFarquhar, a farmer who resides at Dell, in the north of Lewis.

It is believed, however, by those who annually visit Rona with Mr. MacFarquhar that trawlermen, pursuing their calling in North Atlantic and Icelandic waters, sometimes land on Rona for the purpose of replenishing their depleted larder with mutton ! But for the greater part of the year Rona is completely cut off by tempests and prolonged fogs.

Mr. MacFarquhar has assured me on more than one occasion that, when approaching Rona, he has heard the seals frequenting its waters making music 'like a great, Gaelic congregation singing psalms.' Apart from the sheep, the seal may be regarded as Rona's largest mammal, though whales often are sighted in its vicinity. The seals breed on the lower ledges of the rocky coast, where it is not altogether shoreless, and also on the neighbouring skerries. Their number has been estimated at roughly two hundred and fifty.

The Island possesses neither rabbits nor reptiles ; and careful observations carried out by at least three competent naturalists failed to prove the existence either of rats or of mice.

The bird-life of Rona is similar to that of St. Kilda, or of the Flannan Isles. The commonest bird is Leach's fork-tailed petrel. The species next in importance is the fulmar. More than fifty species of birds, resident and migratory, have been listed on Rona by T. H. Harrisson, the ornithologist.

The mystery of North Rona cannot be very different from that of Hirta, since it also was peopled on a time, and likewise had to be abandoned to the seals and the ghosts and the sea-birds. Here is another outpost of Scotland where,

in the struggle for existence, Nature has conquered man, and compelled him to retreat more than forty miles.

This Isle of the Seals (called *North Rona* so as to distinguish it from *South Rona*, which lies between Skye and the mainland of Wester Ross) is approximately a mile and a half in length from north to south. Toward the south it attains a maximum breadth of about a mile. It is composed of Lewisian gneiss, the oldest-known rock in the world. Its total area is somewhere in the neighbourhood of three hundred acres. 'The island has the shape of a decanter with the neck towards the north,' wrote Captain Burnaby, who visited Rona in the early spring of 1852; and his description is accepted by more recent investigators as being quite appropriate. The impression Rona makes upon one approaching it for the first time is at once startling and enduring; and the experience of setting foot on such territory, as the writer well knows, defeats all powers of tongue or pen, for the nature of such experience is basic, elemental, remote. The abiding solitude, disturbed only by the breaking seas, by the occasional bleating of sheep, by the haunting calls of sea-fowl, and often by the roar of wind among the cliffs and caverns, never fails to convey one back and back to time primordial.

The cliffs of Rona are of considerable height; and they fall sheer to the Atlantic. They are the resort of countless sea-birds. In this respect Rona resembles Sula Sgeir, that lone and precipitous gannetry lying roughly a dozen miles to the westward, and likewise visited annually by a fowling party from Lewis. These cliffs are exposed to the unbridled fury of the Atlantean storms; and out of them sea erosion has scooped innumerable caves and geos.

According to Sir Archibald Geikie, who landed on Rona in 1894, the sea has piled up, in the form of a huge ridge

more than seventy feet in height, great quantities of blocks of rock along the north-western coast, with the result that, in time of gales and heavy seas, tons of sea water have been thrown up over this ridge, and have descended eastward to the sea in streams that have cut their courses down through the turf surface to the naked gneiss below.

Except for the northern and south-western extremities, Rona supports a flourishing vegetation. There is neither heather nor peat; but grass grows profusely, and to an unusual height in places. This grass affords rich pasturage for the two hundred sheep belonging to Mr. MacFarquhar, aforementioned. In the absence of heather, the natives burned dried divots, and driftwood when it was procurable.

There is no running water on the Island, apart from those temporary streams of brine sent over by gales from the north-west, and referred to by Geikie as having cut channels down through the turf to the gneiss. But seldom does Rona pine for moisture: rain, on the contrary, is one of its most insistent visitors. On the lower ground water may be found readily by digging, especially to the south of the ruined and deserted village. In olden times the Island possessed several wells. Though the sites of many of these are marked on the Ordnance Survey Map, and still may be seen, only the well located near Poll Heallair, in the south, is serviceable at the present time.

Probably the earliest record we possess of Rona is that contained in the celebrated *Description of the Western Isles of Scotland called Hybrides*, by Donald Monro, High Dean of the Isles, who made his historic itinerary about the middle of the sixteenth century. Dean Monro refers to this Island as having been exceptionally fertile, 'and inhabit and manurit be simple people, scant of ony religione.' In his day, Rona carried both sheep and cattle, with the flesh of which the



inhabitants paid to MacLeod of Lewis, their overlord, the greater part of their dues. Quantities of the meal of bere, transported from Rona to Lewis in the skins of native sheep, and also sea-fowl taken on the cliffs and skerries, comprised the remainder of their payment in kind. This rental was collected by MacLeod's steward, who visited Rona annually.

Monro mentions, too, that the inhabitants used to catch many whales 'and uthers grate fisches.' In referring to St. Ronay's (Ronan's) Chapel, he tells us that within this building they used to retain a spade and a shovel, and that, whenever any member of the community died, his neighbours purported to discover on the morrow that these implements were marking the spot at which the grave was to be delved. The Dean concludes his *Descriptione* with an account of Rona's distant associate, lonely Sula Sgeir. He alludes to the yearly excursion to this isle by the men from Ness, in order to collect a boat-load of sea-birds and their down and feathers.

The next account we have of Rona and of the ancient community dwelling upon it is that supplied to Sir Robert Sibbald, more than a century later, by the Lord Register, Sir George MacKenzie of Tarbat. This account enables us to picture the conditions of life endured by this remote colony. According to it, Rona for many generations had been inhabited by five families. Its population seldom exceeded thirty souls. The natives lived on commonwealth lines. When any of them had more children than his neighbours, the additional parental burden arising therefrom was taken off his shoulders by a family that numbered less.

By this time the Island had passed out of the possession of the hapless MacLeods of Lewis, and into the possession of the MacKenzies of Seaforth. Rona, therefore, was now the property of the Earl of Seaforth ; and, when Seaforth's

boat arrived annually in the summer, it took off, in addition to the customary dues in kind, the population in excess of thirty. As in the time of Dean Monro, the inhabitants paid yearly to their overlord a quantity of meal stitched up in sheep-skins, together with sea-fowls' feathers. Their sheep, according to the Lord Register, bore wool of a bluish colour.

The natives of Rona enjoyed the Romish religion, we are told by the same authority ; and one of their number acted as chief, and issued commands and instructions to the rest of the community. So contented were they with their lot, that they always bewailed the misfortune of the supernumeraries who, each year, were obliged to be taken off to the Lewis by Seaforth's boat.

Whereas the Island itself yielded them fuel only in the form of turf, they maintained that the seas, by God's special dispensation, cast upon their cliffs an abundant supply of timber at all times.

The most illuminating of the several accounts of North Rona is, unquestionably, that given by Martin Martin, which first appeared in 1703. Martin obtained his information from several of the natives of Lewis who had been there, but principally from the Rev. Daniel Morrison, minister of Barvas, when the latter returned to Lewis from a visit to this remote fragment of his parish. Rona at that time formed part of the minister's glebe.

When Morrison landed on the Island, the inhabitants received him affectionately and, adopting their usual salutation, addressed him as follows : ' God save you, pilgrim ! You are heartily welcome here, for we have had repeated apparitions of your person among us (after the manner of the second-sight), and we heartily congratulate your arrival in this our remote country.' One of the natives then pro-

ceeded to express his high esteem for the minister by walking round him sunwise, and at the same time blessing him and wishing him every happiness. Morrison strove hard to convince this islander that he already was sufficiently sensible of his kindly intention without the necessity for his expressing it in this extravagant way. But this frankness on his part was received by the community with profound misgiving. The natives could not understand why the minister should have taken exception to their performing this ancient and innocent ceremony ; and they assured their visitor from Barvas that they not only regarded this homage as due to him in his especial position, since they looked upon him as their chief or patron, but that they would continue to perform it, whether he liked it or not !

Following upon this pleasant disputation, the Rev. Daniel Morrison was then conducted to the little village of Rona, wherein all the inhabitants resided, and where he entered some three enclosures. The indwellers severally saluted him and, taking him by the hand, gave expression to the phrase (in the Gaelic, of course), ‘ Traveller, you are welcome here ! ’ They then escorted him to the house that had been assigned for his lodging. There the minister found that a seat had been provided for him in the nature of a bundle of straw set down on the floor. Some time then elapsed in general discussion ; and thereafter the islanders retired to their respective dwellings. A sheep was then killed by each of the five families. The skins of these sheep were flayed off in a manner such as rendered them easily convertible into sacks. These skins were immediately filled with barley-meal, and presented to the minister as a mark of their esteem. ‘ Traveller,’ said the spokesman of the Island, ‘ we are very sensible of the favour you have done us in coming so far with a design to instruct us in our way to happiness, and at

the same time to venture yourself on the great ocean ; pray be pleased to accept of this small present, which we humbly offer as an expression of our sincere love to you.'

The sheep-skins of barley-meal the minister accepted gratefully, for he was touched by the air of hospitality and goodwill with which the islanders responded to his visit. In the minister's man they bestowed some pecks of meal, because they, in like manner, regarded him as a traveller. No such beneficence was showered on the boat's crew, since its members had been at Rona on previous occasions, and could not be regarded, therefore, as strangers. But they willingly supplied the crew with board and lodgings during the minister's sojourn in their midst.

Martin mentions the Chapel dedicated to Saint Ronan, Saint Ronay, and encircled by a stone wall. This Chapel the inhabitants kept in a state of great perfection. Every day they swept it. On Sunday mornings they assembled in the Chapel to repeat the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. On the altar lay a big plank, some ten feet in length. In this plank holes had been made at an interval of roughly a foot apart ; and in each hole was placed a stone to which the natives ascribed different virtues. No such stone is said to have possessed the power of promoting speedy delivery to a woman in travail.

At the time of the Rev. Daniel Morrison's visit, the natives owned both cows and sheep. They had, forby, a supply of barley and oats. They led a harmless existence, ' being perfectly ignorant of most of those vices that abound in the world.' Of wealth in the form of money they knew nothing, having had no occasion for it. They neither bought nor sold : such commodities as they needed, they obtained by barter. Though they are said to have been fastidious in their dealings with one another as regards such expressions

of private property as their respective fishings, they were strict in their observance of the Tenth Commandment. Contented with their conditions as regards food, shelter, and raiment, they did not covet riches. And, although they always maintained a hospitable attitude towards strangers, they took very little interest in the rest of mankind. Apart from the esteem and affection in which they held the inhabitants of northern Lewis, they were interested in no one but themselves.

The Island supported five families at the time of Morrison's visit. Each family occupied its own dwelling-house, to which was attached a barn and a byre. The houses were built of stone ; and the roofs of the same were thatched with straw kept down by straw ropes poised with heavy stones. In order to act as a wind-break, and also to keep off rain and snow, a stone porch was erected in front of each door. In matters of clothing, they dressed in the same way as did their Ness neighbours ; and, of course, they spoke the same tongue.

Few things astonished a native of Rona, when he arrived on the mainland of Lewis, more than to discover that there were so many people in the world. One of the greatest curiosities to the inhabitants was the sight of a horse. For countless generations they had furrowed the soil of their remote Isle with the ancient *cas-chrom* or ' bent-foot ' plough ; and at no time do they appear to have possessed a horse. When a Rona boy arrived in Lewis, and heard a horse neigh, he enquired whether the animal was laughing at him ! According to Martin, the natives were always ' mightily pleased at the sight of horses,' albeit this scarcely can be said of the boy who, on noticing a colt running toward him, instantly fled with fright, and leapt into a patch of nettles !

This reminds one of the St. Kildan who went to Glasgow,

and felt as though he had dropped out of the clouds. When he saw a pair of horses drawing a coach, which he took to be a tiny house with two men seated inside, he was of opinion that the horses actually were drawing the coach with their tails. The same native was taken greatly with the movement of the coach's wheels ; but he thought that only a coachman who was mad would sit on the roof of the little house, when he might have been safer and more comfortable on the back of one of the horses !

Another native of Rona, afforded the opportunity of travelling as far afield as Coul, in Ross-shire, was dumb-founded by everything that came his way ; but few things surprised—nay, terrified—him more than the noise made by those who walked across the floor of the room above him. He verily believed that the house was toppling about his ears.

As might have been expected in such lonely and austere surroundings, the inhabitants harboured many superstitions. They believed, for example, that only after the death of the Earl of Seaforth, or of the minister, did they hear or see the cuckoo on Rona.

Somewhere about the year 1689, a plague of rats, in some unaccountable manner, visited Rona, and devoured all the islanders' corn. Shortly afterwards, it is said, a number of seamen landed and deprived the islanders of their bull. It is thought that, as the result of misfortunes such as these, together with the fact that for a whole year weather conditions had prevented the landing of supplies from Lewis, the entire population perished. The Steward of St. Kilda, as it happened, had been driven on to Rona by a storm ; and there, at the side of a rock, he found a dead woman with a dead child at her breast. Some years later, however, the minister of Barvas sent forth a new colony to the Island,

duly provisioned. The boat sent to Rona by the minister the following year, for the purpose of landing further supplies and of collecting dues from the colony, was lost, with the result that at this stage there ensues a period during which we learn nothing of happenings on Rona. How the new plantation fared, no one quite knows. There can be little doubt that it endured great privation, and possibly extinction.

From the time of the visit of the Rev. Daniel Morrison, which must have been prior to 1703, until about 1812, we appear to know nothing of Rona or of Sula Sgeir. In 1812 the Island was visited occasionally by boats from the *Fortunée*, then engaged in cruising in these waters. Two years later, Dr. John MacCulloch, the tiresome 'Stone Doctor,' landed on Rona; and, from the fact that the women and children fled and hid themselves on his arrival, MacCulloch makes the deduction that at this time visits to Rona must have been few and far between.

MacCulloch failed to effect a landing on Sula Sgeir. But he was justifiably proud of his having succeeded in setting foot on Rona. 'To have visited Barra and Rona,' he wrote, 'gives a claim to distinction scarcely less in their estimation than to have explored the sources of the Nile or the Niger.' It should be mentioned that in olden times the name, Barra, or more often North Barra, was applied to Sula Sgeir.

MacCulloch found one cottar and his family on Rona. The cottar's name was Kenneth MacCraigie. For services rendered, Kenneth received food for himself and his family, and two pounds paid in garments which had to clothe six persons—the total population of Rona at the time. Kenneth apparently was tied to the Island for a term of eight years. In order to remove from him and his family the temptation that in all probability would have resulted in their drowning,

he was not permitted to have a boat. The family possessed a cow that had been brought from Lewis when in milk ; and from the milk of sheep it prepared cheeses, some of which MacCulloch took away with him.

The last family to inhabit North Rona was that of a shepherd named Donald MacLeod, who was known among the people of Ness as King of Rona. In 1844 Donald and his dependants returned to Lewis. Except for the annual sheep-shearing visits paid by Mr. MacFarquhar and his party, and for the solitary exile on the Island of two men who perished there in 1885, Rona has remained unpeopled since. Six years after this final evacuation (1850), Sir James Matheson, who in 1844 had purchased the Lewis from the trustees of the MacKenzies of Seaforth, offered this lone, Atlantic outpost as a gift to the Government, with the suggestion that it should be used as a penal settlement. The Government wisely declined the offer.

Accounts of more recent visits to Rona are of less interest, since they are all subsequent to the evacuation. In 1857, and again in 1860, T. S. Muir went to Rona and carried out minute investigations of an archæological and ecclesiological nature, records of which are to be found in his extensive writings. Accurate plans and measurements of the Chapel, known as *Teampull Rona*, were made by him.

The Chapel, of course, is the most interesting structure on the Island. At the time of Muir's visit, it consisted for the most part of a rounded heap of stones, roofed over with turf. The cell within measured 11 feet 6 inches in length, and 7 feet 6 inches in width at the floor. Its maximum height was 9 feet 3 inches. Other details may be found in Muir's description, which is very complete. Muir had the advantage of being able to set down details and measurements of the Chapel when it was much less of a ruin than



it is to-day. The Chapel at the present time is falling into rapid dilapidation ; and, as Malcolm Stewart observes in his delightful volume entitled *Ronay*, 'it would be absolutely unforgivable if this unique building were permitted to become a total ruin.' To-day the Chapel is occupied by representatives of the feathered clans. Its corners and crannies are the nesting-place of the fulmar petrel.

During the last quarter of a century, both Rona and Sula Sgeir have been visited frequently, other than by the men from Ness, who yearly sail to the former principally to attend to the sheep, and to the latter to obtain some of the countless solan geese frequenting its cliffs. The Duchess of Bedford landed on Rona in 1907, and again in 1910. In 1914, just three weeks after the outbreak of the Great War, the cruiser, *Sappho*, went to North Rona to search the Island, it having been rumoured that the enemy was using it as an aircraft base—a purpose to which it scarcely could lend itself, as was demonstrated subsequently. In December, 1915, the Second and Fourth Battle Squadrons, accompanied by the *Iron Duke*, proceeded westward from the Orkneys to carry out target-practice at Sula Sgeir ; and in 1924 some of the Commissioners of Historic Monuments disembarked at Rona.

In the summer of 1927, my late friend, Dr. John Wilson Dougal, of Edinburgh, sailed northward with Mr. MacFarquhar from Port of Ness, and spent some considerable time both on Rona and on Sula Sgeir with his geological hammer. In the early autumn of 1930 and of 1931, Mr. Malcolm Stewart, aforementioned, landed on Rona ; and in the summer of 1932 he visited the gannet isle of Sula Sgeir.

The story of Sula Sgeir, like that of Rona, is inseparable from that of Ness. Though from time immemorial crews of Ness seamen have made excursions to this lonely rock in

order to obtain boat-loads of solan geese, it is visited less frequently than Rona. The annual sojourn on Sula Sgeir of the Ness fowlers is usually from seven to ten days' duration, when weather permits a landing at all. Storms have been known to detain the fowlers for several weeks; and this is why they always see to it that they embark from the Port of Ness well provisioned in the matter of food, drinking water, and fuel.

Although Sula Sgeir is deeply indented by three small bays and several caves, it possesses no beach. Like Rona, it is shore-less. Thus, when the Ness men disembark on the landing-cliff, where a ledge affords foothold of about six inches in width, they haul their craft, weighing roughly a ton, up the precipitous cliffs to a height of sixty feet, and secure it there with strong ropes against storms. At this altitude the boat remains until the crew is ready to return to the Port of Ness.

These fowling parties have been known to reach Ness with as many as 2,800 solans. Though the Ness fowlers slay the solan goose in such numbers, they have a sort of traditional affection for this bird. It is known among them as Brenhilda's Bird.

With Rona and Sula Sgeir are associated many weird stories, both of olden times and of times more recent. Such stories may be heard from the lips of the people of Ness, any day of the year. In June, many, many years ago, a crew from Ness, when on a fowling expedition, had its boat wrecked in landing on Sula Sgeir. For several weeks the marooned islanders maintained themselves on the flesh of sea-fowl. A search for the Ness men brought the revenue cruiser, *Prince of Wales*, to Sula Sgeir in the month of August. The cruiser was commanded by one, Captain Oliver, who landed some of his men to make a thorough investigation.

They noticed the wrecked boat, and also an oar stuck up on end, with a pair of trousers affixed to it. A pot containing birds' flesh hung over a sodden fire. Nowhere on the Island could any humans be found. It was surmised either that all of them had been drowned, or that they had been taken off by another vessel. Time passed ; and nothing more was heard of the missing crew until the following October, when a Russian vessel, homeward-bound, encountered a Stornoway boat in the Orkneys, and informed the crew of the latter that she had taken a number of men off Sula Sgeir, and landed them on Rona. Captain Oliver then steamed out to Rona, where he found the shipwrecked Lewismen in process of consuming the last of the food on the Island. Great was the rejoicing in Ness, and indeed throughout the Northern Hebrides, when ultimately they were landed on the mainland of Lewis again.

Except for the annual excursion from Ness of Mr. Alexander MacFarquhar and his shepherds and fowlers, Rona now remains little but a grim reminder of a race that faced its indescribable solitude and desolation. Untended sheep roam over its hillsides : grey seals sing in its caverns : sea-birds innumerable inhabit not merely every ledge of its cliffs, but also every nook of the old, primitive village, and of St. Ronan's Chapel. The quern-stones, that crushed the grain of the ancient inhabitants, lie buried deep in the grassy turf.

For weeks on end, and sometimes even for months brooding fogs envelop this, the loneliest of the British Isles ; and for more than half the year the storms of the Atlantic, unfettered, reverberate through the ruined, ghost-haunted homesteads of a vanished people.

## A GRAVE AT RODIL.

*Among the timeless grasses  
 A greying headstone stands.  
 That boy once fished these rivers  
 Which spill, ice-cold, on sands  
 Fresh pleated into ripples  
 By shell-tipped mermaids' hands.*

*He loved this haunted island,  
 Elysium of rods,  
 Its treeless Faery landscape  
 Of kelp-hung rocks and sods;  
 The Hebridean silence  
 And twilight of the gods.*

*He knew soft-spoken crofters  
 To harsh starvation born,  
 Their crumbling turf-grown homesteads,  
 Small rotted plots of corn  
 Self-sown beside the heather,  
 Roped haystacks winter-torn.*

*He visited black houses  
 Wherein each woman weaves  
 The tweed which fragrant peat-reek  
 Indelibly receives;  
 Where nets adorn the roof-tree,  
 Wild marigolds the eaves.*

*In freedom and enchantment  
This boy was reared ; and died  
Submerged within a warship ;  
At length the random tide  
Returned him to his country  
His kin to sleep beside.*

KATHLEEN COLLISON-MORLEY.

### LILIES OF THE VALLEY.

*Slow their silver bells were swinging  
By our garden pale,  
Soft their faery chimes were ringing,  
Lilies of the vale.  
Hand in hand we came together  
On that day of days ;  
Golden glowing June's glad weather  
As we plucked three sprays.*

*One we offered to the Maiden ;  
One against my breast,  
With your fragrant kisses laden,  
Softly drooped to rest.*

*One you took to keep, a treasure  
From our wedding day ;  
Whispering, though Time should measure  
Days and years away,  
You would, while that blossom keeping  
Morning, night and noon,  
Were it but in dream when sleeping,  
Wed with me each June.*

ÚI BRÍUIN.

*BIG JOHN.*

BY FRANK SPROTT.

BIG JOHN's master was a tough, wiry, little man with whom I did some shooting in S. India many years ago. He and another friend of mine and I used to tramp for hours together on the look out for anything shootable from jungle fowl to tiger, and very difficult did my friend and I find it to keep pace with the little man, who had the longest stride of anyone I have ever met and, in addition, seemed to be able to keep it up all day.

Big John—so called to distinguish him from Little John, who was an ordinary fox terrier—was half fox-terrier and half bull-terrier, in appearance taking after the former mostly, but having a good deal of the weight, width of skull and shoulder and neck muscle of the old type of bull-terrier. A sturdy, virile sort of dog.

He had made a great reputation for himself—down Travancore way, I believe it was—a couple of years before by following up a wounded tiger and staying with him all one night and until he was tracked down and finished off the next day. Of course, when Big John was missed the evening the tiger was wounded, it had been assumed that either the tiger had got him or perhaps a panther, so that, when he was found the next day still quietly keeping in touch with the wounded beast, his reputation as quite an exceptional hunter was made.

Big John's master had only been with us a few months, when he was ordered to go to a place to which it was quite impossible for him to take his dogs, and so he asked me if

I would look after them for him and, if also I had to leave before he could claim them, pass them on to a good home.

Knowing the dogs a little and also being somewhat curious about Big John's unusual reputation, I accepted the charge gladly and hoped that the chance might come my way of trying him out, and—if his reputation was justified—of watching his method of tackling such dangerous opponents as tiger or panther.

At that time I was managing a largish coffee estate, on and near which was plenty of jungle and thick lantana bush, which held a lot of game of sorts, but not at all easy to get at. There were several panther about and more than one tiger passed through the estate on his regular rounds and, whenever these were approximately due, I used to have my old shikari, Bima Gowda, on the look out for a kill or for pug-marks.

When Big John came to me, he was still perhaps in his prime as far as actual health and strength were concerned, but he was settled in his ways and deliberate and had begun to show signs of middle age. He quietly went his way and neither interfered with nor was molested by my other dogs. He was quite friendly and generally came out with me when riding or tramping round the estate or when I wandered out of an evening with a gun, but he was never demonstrative and I did not worry him to come out, if he did not want to, as he was obviously intelligent and sensible enough to keep himself fit and therefore probably had a perfectly sound canine reason for not coming.

That he had his own methods of hunting quickly became obvious and I could not make him alter them to suit my purpose, if my ideas did not happen to fit in with his, so I used to let him have his way and then, if it became obvious after a while that there was a difference of opinion between

us as to the correct way to conduct some particular beat, I would leave him to it and move on !

What usually happened was that, while walking along a road or a path, Big John would pick up a scent and slip quietly into the jungle. I would stay where I was or move along to what seemed to me to be a likely vantage-point for a shot. Presently perhaps without a sound a jungle sheep (muntjac) would scurry across the road and I would be taken completely by surprise or get a hurried snap shot as the case might be. Invariably though a few seconds behind the animal would emerge Big John at a quiet lope and that beat would be over ! He had done his bit in getting the animal across the road and, if I had misjudged the place where it was most likely to cross or had been too slow with the shot, then that was my affair. The main difficulty was that the dog hunted absolutely mute, never rushed or startled his quarry and the whole proceedings took place in complete silence and with practically no indication of what was about to happen. His technique and jungle-craft were, I am sure, perfect and perhaps, if I had had him longer, I might have guessed his intentions better and been more successful.

At times, of course, Big John would get on to an animal that insisted upon trying to break the wrong way or else perhaps a sounder of pig which, like their Sussex brethren, 'wu'dn't be druv'. On these occasions I used to wait for ten minutes or so, perhaps hearing an occasional far-away scuffle in the jungle, and then decide that I must get on with my job, if this occurred when I was walking from one gang of coolies to another some considerable distance away. A few calls to Big John producing no immediate response, I would leave him to it, knowing full well that there is none so deaf as he that will not hear.



On one occasion my head maistry<sup>1</sup> happened to follow me a short while after I had left Big John to his own devices when, across the road in front of the maistry, streamed a whole family of pig, ranging from huge, formidable boar to toothsome squeakers, and at the back of all came Big John the Drover ! He had felt impelled to finish his job, although it had taken some considerable time to round them all up and to persuade 'paterfamilias,' who was probably nearly ten times the weight of Big John, to take the direction that he wished them to take.

Some months after Big John had come to me, I received khubber<sup>2</sup> that fresh tracks of a tiger had been seen on a certain part of the estate and so, as there seemed to be a fair chance that Stripes might still be somewhere in the vicinity, I determined to have a small beat of a strip of jungle where I might get a chance of a shot, if he happened to be lying up there and could be persuaded to break cover in the right direction.

Somewhat to my surprise one of the 'stops' reported that a small tiger did actually break back past him during the beat and that he had gone off in a direction that might take him off the estate altogether and on to a neighbouring one. I was rather disappointed, as this was the nearest I had been able to get to a tiger up to that time, but I decided that I would not disturb things any more that day in the hopes that he might come back before long.

Early the next morning, however, I was awakened soon after dawn by a maistry of mine, who was ordinarily a sound, steady sort of fellow and a good shot, but who was now breathless and obviously badly scared.

He told me that the previous evening he had sat up in the crotch of a Ceara rubber-tree near the beat we had just had

<sup>1</sup> Gancz, Headman.

<sup>2</sup> Information.

in the hopes of bagging a pig. The tree was near one of the big estate roads and commanded the openings of one or two well-used game-tunnels through a belt of thick lantana on the other side of the road. For the purpose that he had intended the site was ideal, but it was anything but a satisfactory one, he thought, for what had actually occurred.

It had been one of those moonlight nights, when the light is shifting and uncertain with patches of bright moonlight and inky black shadows ; a cloud moves across the moon, and whilst sight is obscured for a few moments, one has a feeling that many things are hurriedly changing places. The sort of night, indeed, when nerves are a bit jumpy for no apparent reason.

The maistry had been sitting in his tree for some time, when suddenly he saw a large shadow emerge from one of the game-tunnels opposite. He could not see the animal at all clearly, but, what with being a bit jumpy, stiff and cold, he had a pot-shot at the shadow with slugs ! The instant result was apparently all hell let loose, and the wretched fellow was petrified when he realised that he had fired at and evidently hit a large tiger, whilst he himself was sitting in a perfectly open tree not more than 7 or 8 feet from the ground and probably in full view of the tiger ! According to his terrified fancy, the tiger had rolled in the road tearing up great chunks of earth and roaring terrifically and had then dragged itself back through the game-tunnel, after which he had sat frozen with fear and cold until the dawn and without daring to move.

I was very fed up at hearing his story, as it seemed to me that unwittingly he had bagged a good-sized old tiger that I had been after many a time, when his regular rounds had brought him into my vicinity. From the maistry's description he sounded to be a badly wounded animal, so, as the

place was only about three-quarters of a mile from my bungalow, I decided that I would just slip down and see the marks, then, having made my deductions, I would leave him to stiffen up a bit more, whilst I started the labour on their day's work. Somewhat sadly I reflected that I should then probably find a dead or completely disabled tiger and not be able to call it mine.

I found a very different story, however, when I got to the spot. Instead of the torn-up road and the pools of blood that I had expected to find, there were just two groups of long and deep claw-marks in the road and a few spots of blood. What I think had happened was that the tiger got such a shock from surprise and from the two slugs that hit him (one of which I found later embedded in the muscles of his jaw and the other in a muscle in his back) that he gave a jump, making those great scratches in the ground as he did so, and perhaps actually did roll over in pain and anger as he landed. Luckily for my maistry he must have lost direction, so stood roaring in anger but without seeing anything to charge at and, at length, turned back up the tunnel, from which he had just emerged.

This put quite a different complexion on matters and, as inclination combined with a sense of public obligation, I decided that a wounded, angry and probably quite active tiger should not be allowed to roam at large in a fairly thickly populated area and that work on the estate must look after itself temporarily, whilst I got after that tiger without delay.

Fortunately also it was a time of year when there was only straightforward routine work going on and nothing that required urgent attention. Accordingly I got hold of some coolies and sent messages to my head shikari, old Bima Gowda, who lived a couple of miles away, to come at once with the big spear that I used in case I had to follow up

an animal in thick lantana, and also to my second shikari and house servants to bring down my double-barrelled 12-bore shot-gun with lethal bullet and slug cartridges, my .318 rifle and the dogs.

If I had had any sense, I would have had something to eat sent down too, but I was beginning to get a bit excited by then and did not think about food at the time, so I missed my breakfast that day and later regretted my thoughtlessness.

A few of the estate coolies, hearing what was on, began to turn up, and then arrived my second shikari with gun, rifle and dogs. As I felt sure that old Bima Gowda would not be long in coming, I determined to make a start, and I thought that here at last was the opportunity to test the truth of Big John's reputation.

First of all, therefore, I told one of my servants to hold Big John, whilst I took the other dogs up to the scent. Without exception they took one sniff at the tracks, down went their tails and they slunk away with nervous backward glances. That was quite enough for them, thank you !

Then I called Big John up and put him on to the scent.

The dog stiffened and all his hackles rose, but after a few moments he turned and walked stiffly away with an expression as much as to say, 'No thanks, I know all about that smell, but I'm not as young as I was or as agile and I think that this is a bit early in the morning and unexpected and all that sort of thing ; go and play yourself, if you want to, but count me out.'

Said I, 'Come, come, Big John, pull yourself together, old man, and remember that reputation of yours. Just come over and have another sniff and then show us how you dealt with little things like tigers in your palniy days.'

Big John came back to me and again I put him on to the

scent. Again he stiffened and his hackles rose, but he continued sniffing, and instead of walking away, he moved very, very slowly towards the tunnel in the lantana.

He looked round at me and his mind was obviously made up. His look said quite clearly, 'Right oh ! I'm with you, but just get your fellows ready and follow me.'

Old Bima Gowda had by this time arrived with the long, heavy spear, whose haft was made from an old Toddy Palm and was just about the toughest thing in woods that I have ever met and also very heavy. The dear old man was just the fellow to have behind one with a nice big spear too ! He gave one a comfortable sort of feeling. Although he was getting to be quite an old man and showed the effects of a wild and hectic youth, he was still enormously powerful and I felt quite certain that at the first hint of a charge, down would go the haft of that spear with the ball of his great foot behind it and he would stand like a rock to the charge and take the tiger full on the point.

But let us get back to Big John, who stood waiting for us at the mouth of the tunnel. Those who have never shikarred in terribly thick bush such as lantana may think that I was over-cautious, but I was not looking for casualties of either myself or any of the coolies, so I arranged what I considered to be the safest method of tracking through the lantana, albeit a slow one perhaps. Big John obviously approved of it, however ! First the dog moved a few feet into the tunnel very slowly and carefully ; next came two coolies cutting the lantana back to make a reasonably broad path ; then myself with my shot-gun loaded with a lethal bullet in the right barrel and slugs in the choke ; behind me came Bima Gowda with the spear and behind him again came my second shikari with the rifle in case it might be needed later on.

The orders were that at the first sign of a charge the two coolies were to throw themselves back against the walls of lantana and, if possible and time permitted, get to the rear. This would give me a clear field of fire and I had great faith in the lethal bullet at close range for such soft-skinned game as tiger and panther. If I did not manage to stop the brute completely with lethal bullet and slugs at a few yards' range, I would throw myself back and leave Bima Gowda free to take him on the point of the spear at the very mouth of the tunnel and I should also be able to get back to my rifle with seven shots in it. The general idea seemed to be all right, but perhaps it was just as well that its efficacy was not tested.

I kept my eyes glued on Big John as we slowly cut our way down the tunnel. The dog did not attempt to range off on his own, but kept moving slowly just a few feet in front of the cutters. After we had gone some distance, there was a branch in the tunnel to the left, and it was here perhaps that I most appreciated the wisdom—and the nerve—of the dog. The tiger had obviously been up this tunnel either before or after being wounded, so it could not be disregarded. If we had decided to cut our way up this tunnel first, we should have been in just the same position as if we had elected to go straight on, as in either case we should have been entirely unprotected in the rear; not at all a pleasant position with a wounded tiger in the neighbourhood.

Big John settled the matter—he looked back and said quite clearly, 'You fellows just hold on a moment and I will go up this tunnel and make sure that the tiger is not up there.' Accordingly I stopped the coolies cutting and watched Big John as first he looked long and intently up both the tunnels before disappearing very slowly and silently

up the tunnel to the left. We waited and listened anxiously for several minutes before the dog came back with an 'all clear' expression on his face. He then turned along the main tunnel again and we resumed our progress. As we cut past the side tunnel I sent Bima Gowda up it and he reported that the tiger had definitely been along it and had lain down a short distance up. After a bit more cutting the lantana gradually thinned, and we came out on to a space covered with knee-deep grass, through which the track of the tiger showed clearly where the dew had been brushed off in his passage.<sup>a</sup> He was obviously making for a short, steep-banked nullah, the head of which lay quite close and which debouched on to some small paddy-fields with a goodish patch of jungle on the other side.

Since the tiger had lain down fairly close to where he had been wounded, he was obviously disinclined to move very far, and also, as he had not been at all hustled, it seemed probable that he would go into the nullah and stay there. This nullah was quite narrow and short, but it was more or less impenetrable—particularly with a wounded tiger in it—with its almost sheer sides mostly 8 to 10 feet deep and filled with thick undergrowth and several trees and clumps of bamboo. A very good hide for a tiger, in fact.

I determined to try to drive him out—if he was still there, which I felt sure he was—by the paddy-fields, so I gave instructions for a number of beaters to collect stones and range themselves on either side at the head of the nullah without noise and then, after allowing me plenty of time to get into position down in the paddy-fields, to try to drive the tiger down to me by moving slowly along the edges of the nullah throwing stones into it and shouting.

I started to move off to take up my position and whistled to Big John to come with me. There was no sign of him,

however, so I left him to his self-appointed job, whatever it might be, and carried on with mine. And very small and lonely I felt too, when I found myself standing ankle-deep in soft mud and water with the likelihood of a very angry tiger bursting out of the bushes a few yards away from me at any moment. In fact, I wished myself anywhere but where I was just then.

Soon after I got settled old Bima Gowda started the beat, and it very quickly became apparent that Stripes was present and also that, having found 'the better 'ole,' nothing was going to induce him to leave it,

With the first few roars every beater shinned up the nearest tree—most of the labour on the estate seemed to have left work by that time and come to join in the fun—and I think only the two shikaris were left at the top of the nullah, myself at the bottom and Big John nowhere to be seen. The beaters then proceeded to have a game with the tiger, who was by this time working himself up into a towering rage. Those along one side of the nullah (all up trees, of course) would give a concerted series of yells, which had the effect of driving the tiger nearly frantic with fury, as he charged across the narrow nullah with short roars that were absolutely stunning in their volume and concentrated ferocity. There would, however, be nothing to be seen and perfect silence would reign by the time the tiger had made his short charge and then, after a pause, the beaters on the other side of the nullah would do their stuff, and back would charge the tiger more angry than before, if that were possible.

The din was simply terrific; feeding time in the Lion House at the Zoo was as a quiet chant by a cathedral choir compared to the full-throated college yell on the last Sunday of term in the chapel of a big public school.



As soon as I realised that the tiger was not going to be driven out of his nullah, I left the paddy-field and worked my way up and down the sides of the nullah in an endeavour to get near enough for a glimpse of, and a shot at, the tiger as he charged across and across. The sides, however, were very thick with bush, which greatly restricted my movements, and I mostly had to crawl, so that I spent a long time without the slightest success—never, in fact, seeing more than a waving bush or sapling to indicate the tiger's whereabouts.

By degrees, of course, both sides had tired of the game and the tiger would only give an occasional roar in reply to a few desultory yells from the few beaters, who had stayed on to see the thing through or who were disinclined to leave the safety of their trees. By this time also I was beginning to feel decidedly weary, as I had had nothing to eat at all that morning, and I began to feel that the next move was up to me or we should arrive at a position of stalemate, which would be all in the favour of the tiger. I therefore crawled quietly round to find Bima Gowda and have a consultation with him. As luck would have it, I found both the shikaris near practically the only place where the bank of the nullah was comparatively clear of bushes and—more important still—I could hear the tiger breathing down below and apparently behind a clump of bamboo exactly opposite to this clear space. This seemed a heaven-sent opportunity to get a shot (under reasonable circumstances from my point of view, as to have crawled down into the nullah would have been sheer suicide), provided that the tiger could be stirred to wrath once more. He had been passive for some time, so I decided to let him rest in complete quiet for a bit longer with the idea that, having got quite comfortable and perhaps come to the conclusion that his tormentors had withdrawn for good, a sudden rude

disturbance of his peace might bring him to his feet in a charge with the terrain in our favour.

He was lying down apparently about 15 yards away, but, as soon as he rounded the bamboo clump, I reckoned that he would be at any rate partially in sight and would have to charge up a very steep bank—in fact almost a perpendicular one—of some 8 feet high. After a short interval we accordingly lined up very quietly at the edge of the nullah—myself with the shot-gun, Bima Gowda with the spear and the second shikari with the rifle—and then all together we yelled at the top of our lungs. The effect was electrical. With a succession of roars the tiger leapt up still full of fight and was so mad with rage at being disturbed again that he began crashing through the edge of the bamboo clump instead of rounding it properly.

Suddenly a huge, demoniac mask appeared clearly in front of me and not much below—the tiger was apparently on his hind legs—and instinctively my gun was at my shoulder and I fired without any conscious aim at all. The great head disappeared, there was a crash and then dead silence ; it was uncanny and I glanced uneasily at old Bima Gowda. Then slowly rose in the bushes what appeared to be a huge forearm : up and up it came, until it too fell with a dull thud.

Coming so suddenly after the excitement and wild uproar of a few seconds before, that heavy thud and the complete stillness that followed were literally painful in their intense drama, and it was with considerable dislike and trepidation that I faced the prospect of slipping down that bank only a few feet away from a beast that indeed was almost certainly dead, but which had looked like the devil incarnate a few minutes before. However, there was nothing for it but to go and see.

We waited for a little while, throwing clods of earth into the bushes below, and, as these produced no answering movement, I covered Bima Gowda as he quietly slipped down with the spear and I then dropped down behind him. Very slowly and cautiously we rounded the bamboo clump, and there lay the tiger in a welter of blood and there also, quietly sitting *on* the carcase in complete ownership, was Big John !

I had long ago forgotten all about the dog, and yet for several hours in the midst of all that terrific din he must have been just steadily keeping touch with his quarry and was literally in at the death.

I would not have been in that dog's place during those hectic hours for all the gold in the Rand . . .

The tiger was a biggish, heavy beast for a hill tiger ; a little past his prime perhaps, but fat and in good condition. My shot had taken him full in the throat under his chin, as he stood on his hind legs, and the lethal bullet lay in the midst of his broken neck and had caused, of course, instant death with only the one movement of that dramatic paw.

The problem now arose of how to get the carcase home ? Big John added to this considerably by allowing no one to touch the dead tiger but myself and Bima Gowda. He flew at anyone else who came near, so when ropes and coolies arrived, Bima Gowda had to pick up a vehemently protesting dog, carry him up out of the nullah and hold him securely, while I saw to the adjusting of the ropes on the heavy body, which was then dragged out with a considerable amount of difficulty.

Once on the road we had to wait for a bullock-cart to arrive, and here Big John really had a beano. Usually a very quiet dog and not at all pugnacious, he now flew at the very considerable crowd that had collected and drove

them back to a respectable distance, and any pariah dog, that dared even to show itself, was instantly attacked by an avalanche of blazing, white fury—and when he had nobody to chase off Big John resumed his seat on the tiger.

It was just the same when the cart arrived; John had to be held while the tiger was hoisted in, and then in he hopped also and rode up to the bungalow in triumph sitting on the body of his victim.

*S. India.*

### PEACE.

*We came to the valley of flowers, and it was evening;  
Vivid the stars where the white snows hung like ghosts  
Far in the foreign dark; and the flowers wept sweetness  
Under our feet as we crushed them down in hosts.*

*I have known no peace since the song in the valley of flowers,  
For they, the Tibetans that sang, poured all peace that is  
Into the waiting air, to the mountains that drank it  
With the hollow echoes waking ecstasies.*

*Peace yet profounder than the hushed rose the sky takes  
At the setting sun; than the measureless, aching gleam  
Of the sea when a lonely ship dips down the horizon,  
And the strange, great wisdom of gods we feel in a dream.*

*I have heard the songs of the world, but for me, the singers  
Touch not the peace that lies in the depths of song.  
For the heart of peace is passionate, awful beauty  
That, sad and compelled, we search for the whole day long.*

MARJORIE STANNARD.

## BY THE WAY.

FOR all the first half of the year up to now the world has resembled nothing so much as an indiarubber ball, deflated and dented : everybody—at any rate everybody who has ever played games with children—knows the exasperation that descends upon the company when the ball (always, by that perversity of fate inseparable from human existence, the only ball discoverable) goes flobby ; by careful manipulation the dent is squeezed out and the semblance of a ball restored ; the very next blow and the dent—the same dent or another—is once more a mockery to exuberance and a laughing-stock to skill. So with the world of 1938 : Spain, China, Russia, Austria, Poland, Mexico—so rapidly have the dents appeared that there has been no squeezing space between them. And it is, unhappily, our only ball ; and, which is worse, we cannot, like a band of children, give up the game and take, with zest, to hide-and-seek instead. A great pity. However, the ball rolls on, and we with it—and Monaco has not yet sent an ultimatum to San Martino.

★            ★            ★

Every editor must, I suppose, be familiar with the contributor's covering letter, asserting that he (or she) ' may be allowed to observe that he (or she) has knowledge of the background depicted.' It sounds a reasonable enough observation ; possibly, if printed as a preface to the article or story, it would not be out of place, but then it is never intended to be so printed. Its intention is obvious—to make an impression upon the editor which the article or story is unable to make by itself ; as such it is rarely successful. But a whole

series of essays might be written about 'covering letters,' divided into sections according to their *genus*. There is the frankly boastful, the pseudo-modest, the *ad misericordiam*, the disingenuous, and—largest class of all—the completely superfluous ; an editor has hard work sometimes not to degenerate into a cynic. And yet he has his compensations—the new discovery and the ever-increasing list of friends.

\*     \*     \*

'Cast thy bread upon the waters, and it shall come back to thee after many days,' said the prophet. This is true of most published utterances of which any trace may be discerned ; it is especially true of poetry, which works slowly, if at all. At all events it was with a deep sense of gratification that I was told a short while ago by Mr. Clough Williams-Ellis, who besides being an architect has long concerned himself with the beauties of the British Isles, both as Chairman of the Council for the Preservation of Rural Wales and in other capacities, that he had used the lines about the desecration of Snowdon that I wrote in an hour of high indignation as long ago as 1914 with such skilful persistence that the 'barbarous shanty' that then disfigured the summit of that historic mountain is no more. Thanks be for this small mercy !

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Inured as this generation has grown to the enactment of horrors, it still says much for the conscience of mankind that they do provoke indignation—as a result many of us live in a perpetual state of indignation. And, whatever our views upon affairs in general, the bombing of civilians, whether in Barcelona or farther afield in China, still excites disapprobation. This the Japanese have, as yet, hardly sufficiently appreciated ; but they are concerned, and their

friends also, to explain the reasons which have caused such things. Even apart from that, it is as well that the reasons for any big event, with its inevitable long and bitter repercussions, should be made manifest, and two books lie before me which attempt to expound the Japanese to English readers. They are as different in their attitude as in their contents: the first, by Willard Price—some of whose work has appeared in these pages—is titled by a question, *Where are you going, Japan?* (Heinemann, 15s. n.). Mr. Willard says in his Introduction ‘he believes himself the fairest person on earth. But (he adds) the most biased fanatic believes the same of himself. So that gets us nowhere’—at any rate he earnestly strives to be fair, and he is in addition unfailingly graphic; he builds up, almost unconsciously, a frightening, and yet very interesting, picture of a race superbly conscious of their destiny to spread and to dominate—in Manchuria, in Korea, in China, in the Pacific, in the world. ‘They will die rather than surrender. They are accustomed to a Spartan life. They need little. They are used not so much to a low standard of living as to a high standard of simplicity.’ The second book, *Japan in China*, by Kiyoshi Kawakami (Murray, 5s. n.), is, in a sense, complementary; it seeks to prove China the aggressor and sets out the facts from the Japanese angle of vision; it says little as to the bombing beyond the assertion that military objectives were the targets aimed at. Perhaps the most interesting statement of an interesting, though inevitably prejudiced, argument is the admission that ‘whether Japan will succeed or fail will depend largely upon foreign, i.e. Anglo-American, attitude.’ The two books should be read together by anyone desiring enlightenment as to one of the major problems of this much-troubled earth.

Daughter of one Archbishop of Canterbury, wife to another, there have been few more gracious and kindly personalities than *Edith Davidson of Lambeth* (Murray, 9s. n.). Lightly veiling anonymity under the initials M. C. S. M., one who knew her well and loved her much—even as did all who came within her sphere, and that was by destiny unusually wide and varied—has now written a memoir, to which the present Archbishop of Canterbury has contributed a deeply felt little preface, which will be much valued by that large circle that will not readily allow their remembrance of Lady Davidson to fade. M. C. S. M. has written her labour of love with an intimate knowledge with which no one else could have written it—and it was one that was fully worth the writing.



One swallow does not make a spring, but a few long-haired nincompoops can create a delusion ; there are in consequence people who believe that poets must necessarily be imbeciles. *Rough Shooting from Month to Month*, by Julian Tennyson (Black, 10s. 6d. n.), may help to dissipate that belief. Mr. Tennyson's poetry has appeared with acclamation in these pages more than once ; he now publishes the fruits of his experience as an amateur game-keeper and manager of a rough shoot. Every poet—except perhaps the political modernist—must be a nature lover, if not a naturalist ; in this practical and very useful book the study of nature is evident to some purpose, and it will be read with pleasure, and digested with profit, by all who know that there is a great deal more to be got out of shooting than merely marksmanship and that partridge, pheasant, hare, rabbit and duck have not only other enemies besides Man but another existence besides being at the wrong end of a gun. In fact, a



book for many more than those to whom it will have its primary appeal.

★        ★        .   ★   .

An end will come some day presumably to the number of ways in which undesirables can be done to death in crowded places, with a lengthy list of visitors any one of whom has excellent reason for removing the undesirable and an abundance of opportunity—but that day is not yet. Nevertheless, I cannot readily recall anyone so undesirable as James Oliver Railton, bank manager, surrounded by quite so many people who loathed him and were—or might have been—present after hours at the bank when he met his appointed demise as Basil Francis has contrived to represent in *Death at the Bank* (Constable, 7s. 6d. n.). Murder, as all readers of stories of this kind know, is an excessively jolly art ; everyone is always delighted and cracks jokes about it gaily as the mess is cleared up—that is because the victim is always an undesirable ; in this story, Railton being more than averagely undesirable, the hilarity is unrestrained. But has the author ever tried to give anyone, however undesirable, such a bang on the head with a poker that blood and brains were strewn on the carpet ? ‘ Sanguinary Cadaver ’ indeed, and a jolly good time was had by all—or nearly all. Sherlock Holmes, confronted by the problem of the harpoon driven right through a corpse, made experiments upon a dead pig, slung for the purpose ; if Detective-Sergeant Dean had taken him for his model—well, in that case, probably the guilty would never have been discovered. ‘ Have you tried to drive a harpoon through a body ? No ? Tut, tut, my dear sir, you must really pay attention to these details. My friend Watson could tell you that I spent a whole morning in that exercise.’ But alas ! ‘ the Sherlock Holmes Society, like the Red-Headed

League, is dissolved '—and no more can I meet the experts round its table to discuss such vital matters.

· ★ ·      ★      ★

Dust-covers have some advantages or they would not have become universal ; they have also snares, the greatest of which, more especially in the case of novels, is the printing upon them of a summary of the story. Most people prefer to read a story that is unknown, and always when the plot is given away much of the initial interest is dissolved—and summaries, even if accurate, must invariably be bald. I would particularly recommend to all readers of *The Undisciplined Heart*, by Gwen Clear (Constable, 7s. 6d. n.), that they should refrain from reading the summary printed on the inside of the dust-cover : if they do, their enjoyment of a decidedly interesting and unusual novel will be much diminished. And that would be a pity ; it is a story that deserves many readers, a story of temperaments told with delicacy and insight much above the average, and it is not, as it is described, ' the story of a dream that materialised in a disaster.' It is a story of Audrey Warrender and Emily Cavanagh and—the dust-cover notwithstanding—holds the attention as closely as it enlists the sympathy : a fine piece of work.

## THE 'CORNHILL' COMPETITION.

## DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 176.

PRIZES of books to the value of £1, from John Murray's catalogue, are offered to the two solvers whose letters are first opened. Answers, containing the coupon from page v, must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 50 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must reach him by 30th June.

' If to these precepts you attend,  
No ——— need I send  
And so I rest your constant friend.'

1. ' Thou ——— unravished bride of quietness '
2. ' But the sun through the mirk blinks blythe in  
my ———  
" I'll shine on ye yet in your ain countree." '
3. ' Who ——— to their dark wintry bed  
The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low, '
4. ' I am that which began ;  
—— of me the years roll ; '
5. ' I hear the —— about thy keel ;  
I hear the bell struck in the night ; '
6. ' My —— and only Love, I pray  
That little world of thee  
Be govern'd by no other sway  
Than purest monarchy ; '

Answer to Acrostic 174, April number : ' In Memphian Grove or Green (Milton : ' Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity' ). 1. Grow-inG (Burns : ' Lament for Culloden' ). 2. RiveR (Hood : ' The Bridge of Sighs' ). 3. OpE (Crashaw : ' Wishes to his Supposed Mistress' ). 4. VaynE (Spenser : ' Prothalamion' ). 5. EveN (Wordsworth : ' Ode on the Intimation of Immortality' ).

The first correct answers opened were sent by Miss Rosa J. Perry, Beechen Green, Sandy Lane, Ormskirke, and Major Luard, 14 Woodlane, Falmouth, who are invited to choose books as mentioned above. N.B.—*Sources need not be given.*

*Recommended by the Book Society.*

# ED ARD . LEAR

Landscape Painter and Nonsense Poet

By **ANGUS DAVIDSON**

EVELYN WAUGH in the *Spectator* : “ His admirable and wholly delightful biography. It is hard to see how he could have done his work better. The biography is orderly and elegant ; the illustrations are chosen tactfully—more than once with brilliance—the criticism, both explicit and implicit, sound and suggestive : an admirable book.”

EDMUND BLUNDEN in the *Book Society News* : “ I had a little anxiety in opening a modern book on Lear ; but that anxiety soon vanished. It became clear that Lear had found a chronicler with the right touch ; one qualified to speak of him as an artist, a writer and a character. Mr. Davidson has known how to make the best use of Lear’s own notes and journals in a biography which reflects unusual talent, love of life and good humour.”

DESMOND MACCARTHY in the *Sunday Times* : “ Mr. Angus Davidson has had a most delightful task. I can pay him the compliment he would perhaps like best of all, namely that his biography does reveal the contrast between the fevered pulse of Lear’s intimate life and the industrious regularity of his habits.”